Elegant *and* Easy: Three Ways with **Baked Custards**

Make-Ahead Muffins and Rolls for All Your Holiday Celebrations

bake FROM SCRATCH®

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT CAKE ROLL
page 68

57 Recipes + Ideas for **Your Best-Ever Holiday Baking**

Our Favorite
Chocolate + Peppermint Desserts

+ FEATURING
Swiss Holiday Breads and Cookies
with Heddi Nieuwsma and Andie Pilot

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NOV/DEC 2023 VOLUME 9, ISSUE 6

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HOLIDAY HAND PIES

Buttery, flaky pastry and sweet, fruit-studded Bonne Maman® Preserves come together easily to create these colorful and festive seasonal treats.

Makes about 12 hand pies

- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) kosher salt
- 1 cup (227 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- ½ cup (120 grams) ice water, plus more as needed
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
- Bonne Maman® Apricot, Cherry, and Raspberry Preserves
- Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling
- ¾ cup (90 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole milk
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse flour and salt until combined. Add cold butter; pulse until mixture is crumbly and butter pieces are pea-size. With processor running, add ½ cup (120 grams) ice water in a slow, steady stream just until dough comes together. (Mixture may appear crumbly but should be moist and hold together when pinched.) Add additional ice water, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) at a time, as needed.

2. Turn out dough, and divide in half. Shape each half into a disk, and tightly wrap each in plastic wrap; refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 2 days.

3. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

4. On a lightly floured surface, roll one portion of dough to ⅛-thickness. Using 3- to 4-inch assorted holiday cutters, cut 12 pieces of dough, rerolling and cutting scraps once. Transfer dough pieces to prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining portion of dough. Ventilate half of dough pieces by making 2 to 3 small slits in center of dough or cutting out center with a 1-inch holiday cutter.

5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; lightly brush egg wash onto edges of solid dough pieces. Spoon 2 teaspoons (13 grams) preserves onto center of each solid dough piece; top each with a corresponding ventilated piece of dough. Using a fork, crimp edges of dough together. Place about 2 inches apart on pans; freeze until firm, about 15 minutes.

6. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).

7. Brush remaining egg wash onto pies; sprinkle with turbinado sugar.

8. Bake, one pan at a time, until puffed and golden brown, 17 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on a wire rack.

9. In another small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar, milk, and vanilla until smooth; drizzle onto cooled pies. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

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TEST KITCHEN

The recipes in each issue pass through the *Bake from Scratch* test kitchen. Each is flavorful and distinctive and developed with your kitchen success in mind.

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BAKING UP MEMORIES

It's often said that "baking is happiness," and there's something so special about the happiness experienced when baked goods are shared and given during this festive season. It's also said that "baking is therapy," and I've learned the true meaning of that phrase over the last few months as I've adjusted to life without my mom. When I bake, I escape. I focus on the process, the sensory experience, the details, and the beauty of what comes from my oven. My mom was always so proud to receive anything I made, and in the days since she's been gone, I've been baking her favorites—true therapy for me. On page 55, you'll read a lot more about this amazing woman I was fortunate enough to call Mom—and I'm sharing her most favorite pound cake recipe with you, too.

I love exploring different holiday baking traditions around the world, and last year, I had the pleasure of traveling to Switzerland to spend time in the kitchen with Andie Pilot and Heddi Nieuwsma as they shared Swiss bread and cookie recipes with me—and, yes, I was a happy taste tester during the shoots! Next December, our holiday baking retreat will take place in Switzerland, so you, too, can bake in the kitchen with these amazing bakers who live in a postcard of winter wonderland.

We'd all be lying if we denied the competitive nature of baking and wanting to have the best item at the party. My friend Susan Frost has been competing in her office cookie swap competition for 25 years . . . and leaves with dozens of cookies from her colleagues. That's a win-win scenario for a friendly competition that's become a holiday tradition. Read more about her and this fun event on page 21.

As you turn the pages of this issue, you'll find recipes perfect for the season ahead—and a first of its kind for *Bake from Scratch*: cupcakes! In the last eight years, we haven't included a cupcake recipe in the magazine, but when you make the small-batch Vanilla Cupcakes with Vanilla Buttercream on page 108, you'll see why this simple pleasure that highlights vanilla deserved its spot in the issue. Want more cupcakes? Let me know, and I'll see what I can do (wink, wink!).

While my holiday will be different this year, I will find happiness and therapy in my kitchen as I bake for family and friends and smile seeing the recipes you make and share from this issue.

Happy holidays from me and the entire BFS team! Enjoy the baking days ahead, and remember to always bake it your own.

Brian

Brian Hart Hoffman
Editor-in-Chief

Andie and Brian warming up with fondue while in the Swiss region of Emmental, an area known for its cheese

ADVERTISING

BROWN SUGAR CHEESECAKE WITH BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE

The holidays deserve a celebratory dessert, and this stunning cheesecake is it. With its buttery, caramelly flavors, C&H® Light Brown Sugar is a key ingredient at every stage, from the crust that echoes the chewy nuttiness of an oatmeal cookie and the luxuriously smooth and creamy filling to the slightly tangy topping and the decadently rich sauce. This must-bake is pure indulgence in every bite.

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

- **2 cups (180 grams) quick-cooking oats**
- **1½ cups (330 grams) plus 2 tablespoons (28 grams) firmly packed C&H® Light Brown Sugar, divided**
- **¾ cup (94 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 tablespoon (6 grams) ground cinnamon**
- **10 tablespoons (140 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **3 (8-ounce) packages (680 grams) cream cheese, softened**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **2 cups (480 grams) sour cream, room temperature and divided**
- **2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract, divided**
- **4 large eggs (200 grams), room temperature**
- **Butterscotch Sauce (recipe follows)**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C). Spray a 9-inch springform pan with baking spray with flour.

2. For crust: In a large bowl, whisk together oats, ¾ cup (165 grams) brown sugar, flour, and cinnamon; stir in melted butter until well combined and mixture holds together when squeezed. Press into bottom and three-fourths of the way up sides of prepared pan.

3. Bake until crust is fragrant and set, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool completely. Leave oven on; position oven rack in bottom third of oven.

4. Wrap a large piece of heavy-duty foil around bottom and up sides of springform pan; place pan in a large oven-safe bag, tucking ends so bag is flush with top edge of pan. (If you do not have an oven bag, wrap pan in a double layer of foil.) Place wrapped springform pan in a large roasting pan.

5. For filling: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese, ¾ cup (165 grams) brown sugar, and salt at medium speed until smooth and creamy, about 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add 1 cup (240 grams) sour cream and 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla, beating until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Reduce mixer speed to low; add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Pour filling into cooled crust. Place roasting pan in oven, and add hot water to roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of springform pan.

6. Bake until cheesecake wobbles slightly when pan is gently shaken and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 150°F (66°C) to 155°F (68°C), 1½ hours to 1 hour and 45 minutes. Carefully remove roasting pan from oven. Increase oven temperature to 400°F (200°C).

7. For topping: In a medium bowl, whisk together remaining 1 cup (240 grams) sour cream, remaining 2 tablespoons (28 grams) brown sugar, and remaining 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla; carefully spread onto cheesecake with an offset spatula. Carefully return roasting pan to oven.

8. Bake until topping is just set, about 5 minutes. Carefully remove roasting pan from oven, and carefully remove springform pan from water bath. Let cheesecake cool completely in pan on a wire rack. (Once pan is cool enough to handle, carefully remove oven bag and foil.) Refrigerate until cheesecake is cold and set, at least 3 hours, or up to overnight, loosely covering with foil only when completely cool to prevent condensation from forming.

9. Transfer ½ cup (about 124 grams) Butterscotch Sauce to a pastry bag fitted with a small round piping tip (Wilton No. 6), and refrigerate for 30 to 45 minutes.

10. Run a thin-bladed knife between sides of pan and cheesecake, if needed. Carefully remove sides of pan, and transfer cheesecake to a serving plate. Pipe cold sauce on cheesecake as desired. Serve cheesecake with remaining Butterscotch Sauce. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Butterscotch Sauce

Makes 1½ cups

- **1 cup (240 grams) heavy whipping cream**
- **¾ cup (165 grams) firmly packed C&H® Light Brown Sugar**
- **¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**

1. In a medium saucepan, bring all ingredients to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking constantly until butter is melted, sugar dissolves, and mixture is well combined. Cook, whisking frequently, until thickened, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove from heat; let cool completely before using. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

1⅔ cups C&H® Sugar.

5 students with no Thanksgiving plans.

1 unplanned Friendsgiving in the dorm.

3 hours of group baking and bonding.

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Pages 95–102—Recipes (Dreikönigskuchen, Hefegugelhopf, Grittibanz) adapted from *Swiss Bread* by Heddi Nieuwsma. Published by Helvetiq © 2019. Rosinenkranz recipe adapted from *Sweet + Swiss* by Heddi Nieuwsma. Published by Helvetiq © 2023

GINGERBREAD-WHITE CHOCOLATE BLONDIES

Usher in your holiday baking season with these delightfully chewy blondies. Heilala Gingerbread Vanilla Extract enhances the warm, fragrant spices and creamy white chocolate in the blondies, and the silky piped frosting is festively flecked and perfumed with Heilala Pure Vanilla Paste.

Makes 21 blondies

- **1½ cups (330 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar**
- **¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) Heilala Gingerbread Vanilla Extract**
- **1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **¾ teaspoon (1.5 grams) ground ginger**
- **¾ teaspoon (1.5 grams) ground cinnamon**
- **½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg**
- **¼ teaspoon ground cloves**
- **4 ounces (113 grams) white chocolate, roughly chopped**
- **Vanilla Bean Buttercream (recipe follows)**
- **Garnish: assorted holiday sprinkles**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 9-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together brown sugar and melted butter until smooth and well combined; whisk in eggs and gingerbread vanilla extract.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, salt, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture just until dry ingredients are moistened. Fold in white chocolate. Using an offset spatula, spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 25 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack.
5. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan. Cut into 3 (9x3-inch) strips. Cut each strip into 7 (2-inch-wide) triangles.
6. Transfer Vanilla Bean Buttercream to a pastry bag fitted with a small closed star piping tip (Ateco #842), and pipe onto blondies. Garnish with sprinkles, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Vanilla Bean Butterceam

Makes about 5 cups

- **1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened**
- **¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt**
- **2¾ cups (330 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **2 tablespoons (30 grams) heavy whipping cream**
- **1 teaspoon (6 grams) Heilala Pure Vanilla Paste**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and salt at medium speed until smooth and creamy. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar alternately with cream, beginning and ending with sugar, beating until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla paste; scrape bottom and sides of bowl and paddle. Beat at medium-high speed until smooth, pale, and fluffy, 1 to 2 minutes. Use immediately.

ADVERTISING

BUTTERNUT SQUASH-AND-PEPITA PULL-APART BREADSTICKS

There's nothing better to welcome loved ones around the holiday table than the aroma of freshly baked bread. These tear-and-share breadsticks get their golden hue from butternut squash and their pillowy-soft texture from Platinum® Yeast from Red Star®.

Makes 8 breadsticks

3½ to 3¾ cups (438 to 469 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
2½ teaspoons (7.5 grams) kosher salt
1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) Platinum® Yeast from Red Star®
1 teaspoon (2 grams) onion powder
½ cup (120 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
¼ cup (60 grams) whole milk
2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, softened
⅔ cup (162 grams) puréed cooked butternut squash (see Note)
1 large egg (50 grams)
2½ tablespoons (25 grams) pepitas, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon (3 grams) flaked sea salt

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1 cup (125 grams) flour, sugar, kosher salt, yeast, and onion powder by hand until combined.
2. In a small saucepan, heat ½ cup (120 grams) water, milk, and butter over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm milk mixture to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium speed for 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add squash; beat just until combined, about 30 seconds. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 2½ cups (313 grams) flour, beating just until combined.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 17 to 20 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough will mostly pull away from sides of bowl.) Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a ball.
4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.
5. Punch down dough; turn out onto a lightly floured surface. Divide dough into 8 portions (about 110 grams each), and shape into rounds. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes.
6. Lightly spray a 9-inch square baking pan with baking spray with flour. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan.
7. On a lightly floured surface, roll or flatten each portion of dough into an 8x5-inch rectangle. Starting at one long side, roll each rectangle into a log, pinching seam to seal. Place, seam side down, in prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed and fills pan, 30 to 45 minutes.
8. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
9. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough. Sprinkle pepitas and sea salt on top.
10. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), about 30 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan. Serve warm.

Note: *To make butternut squash purée, halve and seed a medium butternut squash and rub 1 tablespoon (14 grams) vegetable oil onto cut sides. Bake, cut side down, on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet at 375°F (190°C) until tender, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Let cool completely, cut side up, on pan. Scoop squash into the work bowl of a food processor, and pulse until almost smooth, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. (Alternatively, mash using a potato masher.) Reserve any leftover purée for another use.*

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FESTIVE FINDS FOR THE SEASON

BAUBLE STOCKINGS

MADE WITH CARE

Born from Katie Stice Stewart's family tradition of saving the best for last, these tiny gems add to the seasonal spirit of giving. The Bauble Stocking is meant to hold a special present for the recipient, and each stocking's design is custom. These two stockings, Bonne Nuit Santa in Paris and Bon Appetit Macarons, were designed by our editor-in-chief, Brian Hart Hoffman, to commemorate his family's 2022 holiday season in France, the last he spent with his mother before her passing earlier this year. (Read more about her on page 55.) Find the stocking meant for you and yours to spread some holiday cheer.

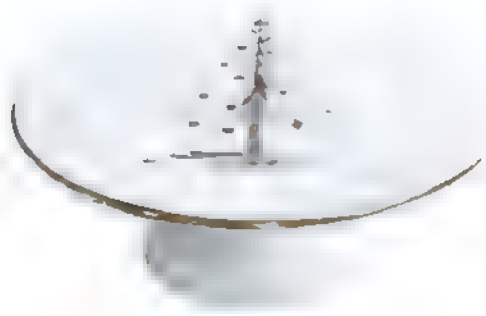
AVAILABLE AT: *bakefromscratch.com/shop*

NORDIC WARE ALPINE FOREST LOAF PAN

WINTER WONDERLAND

This new pan from Nordic Ware creates an edible evergreen forest, with tiered trees awaiting a light snow of confectioners' sugar. The pan is made from high-quality cast aluminum, which ensures the even distribution of heat, allowing for a perfect bake. Start baking for the holidays with this elegant woodland enchanted forest.

AVAILABLE AT: *bakefromscratch.com/shop*



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Vietri is known for its beautiful, handcrafted ceramics, and this festive cake stand is no different. With items made from the highest-quality Italian clay, Vietri craftsmen use traditional methods to create long-lasting products. The glimmering hand-painted tree on this pedestal adds elegance and joy to your table.

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BONNE MAMAN ADVENT CALENDAR

SPREAD THE LOVE

Who doesn't get a little thrill when opening an Advent calendar with a goody hidden behind each tiny door? Packaged in whimsical wintry scenes, Bonne Maman's annual, limited-edition calendar is filled with 24 jars of its delicious preserves and spreads, including ones that can be found only during the holidays.

AVAILABLE AT: *bonnemaman.us*

HOLIDAY COUPETAILS

MORE THAN A COCKTAIL BOOK

Just in time for the holidays, Brian Hart Hoffman and Brooke Bell bring you a collection of festive cocktail recipes and sweet treats. These libations are inspired by their travels as well as cherished memories with family and friends. Nestled among the beverages, you'll find appetizers and desserts to help ring in the holiday season. Pop some bubbly and raise a coupe to your new favorite cocktail book, *Holiday Coupetails*.

AVAILABLE AT:
bakefromscratch.com/shop

ADVERTISEMENT

The Greatest Baker

SERVING UP SOME SWEETNESS

HARMONY DONEGAN-DAVIDSON

HARMONY WAS BORN TO BAKE. The 17-year-old high school student from San Diego learned to love the craft while watching her grandmother in the kitchen. Today, she spends most of her time cooking all things sweet and savory from scratch and has a home-baking business for people with dietary restrictions like hers. "I was able to get into cooking classes at my high school after I started my business. I'm so grateful for my teacher Mr. Perez who has done nothing but support and encourage me on this journey," she says.

Baking style: Creative, simplistic, inclusive, original, homemade

Who do you want to cook beside: Gordon Ramsay (He's a pro!)

What would you call your bakery: Warm Delights Bakery

Baking tip: Use dark brown sugar for soft and chewy cookies, light brown sugar for thin and crispy

Signature dish: Savory – Chicken noodle soup. Sweet – Pumpkin bread

Favorite ingredient to cook with: Sourdough starter

Nickname: Harms, Ham, Star, Sugar cookie, Monkey, Pumpkin

Dark or white chocolate: Dark chocolate

If you could make a new holiday, what would it be: National Weird Food Combination Day

What is your happy place: The city! I love the hustle and bustle of it all

5 or 8 hours of sleep: 8 hours! Gotta take care of myself

Instagram: @Warm.Delights.Bakery

ANDREW McDONOUGH B+ FOUNDATION

Colossal Management, LLC raised over $1.3 million from the Greatest Baker Competition in support of the Andrew McDonough Be Positive (B+) Foundation, an organization dedicated to providing financial and emotional support to families of children with cancer nationwide. It funds research to find cures for childhood cancers and advancements in treatment protocols. Donations were raised by Colossal on behalf of DTCare, a United States 501(c)(3) public charity organization that issued the final donation grant, minus Competition fees and costs, to the B+ Foundation. bepositive.org

COLOSSAL

Colossal is the global leader in online competitions and one of the most effective fundraising platforms available for charities so they can focus on raising awareness for the important work they do. While offering extraordinary opportunities to men and women around the world, each online fundraising competition operated by Colossal has become a successful method of fundraising for nonprofits, designed to raise money for important causes. To learn more, visit colossal.org.

THREE-CHEESE FANTAILS

A trifecta of BelGioioso® cheeses makes these buttery pull-apart rolls addictively good. Creamy Ricotta con Latte® adds moisture and richness to the soft, supple dough, which is layered with sweet, nutty Parmesan and sharp, melty Provolone to create a beautiful dinner bread that just might surpass everything else on your table.

Makes 12 rolls

- 3¼ to 3½ cups (406 to 437 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
- 3 tablespoons (36 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
- 2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) instant yeast
- ¼ teaspoon (1.25 grams) baking soda
- ¾ cup (180 grams) plus 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water, divided
- 8 tablespoons (113 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and divided
- ½ cup (120 grams) BelGioioso® Ricotta con Latte® cheese
- 1 cup (100 grams) shredded BelGioioso® Sharp Provolone cheese
- ½ cup (40 grams) shredded BelGioioso® Parmesan cheese
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- 1 tablespoon (2 grams) finely chopped fresh parsley

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together 1 cup (125 grams) flour, sugar, salt, yeast, and baking soda by hand.

2. In a small saucepan, heat ¾ cup (180 grams) water and 3 tablespoons (42 grams) butter over medium-low heat until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C). Add warm butter mixture and ricotta to flour mixture; using the paddle attachment, beat at medium-low speed until combined, about 1 minute, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 2¼ cups (281 grams) flour, beating just until combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.

3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, 12 to 15 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. (Dough will mostly pull away from sides of bowl.) Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a ball.

4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 30 to 45 minutes.

5. Punch down dough; cover and let stand for 10 minutes.

6. In a small microwave-safe bowl, heat remaining 5 tablespoons (71 grams) butter on high in 10-second intervals until melted. In another small bowl, stir together provolone and Parmesan.

7. Spray a 12-cup muffin pan with baking spray with flour.

8. On a lightly floured surface, divide dough in half. Roll half of dough into a 12-inch square. (Keep remaining dough covered with plastic wrap.) Brush 1 tablespoon (14 grams) melted butter onto dough. Cut dough into 12 (6x2-inch) strips. Sprinkle 1 tablespoon (8 grams) cheese mixture onto each of 10 strips. Stack 5 strips, cheese side up, on top of each other; place 1 plain strip, butter side down, on top. Repeat with remaining 6 strips of dough. Using a floured serrated knife, cut each dough stack crosswise into 3 (2-inch) squares. Place dough squares, cut side up, in prepared muffin cups. Repeat procedure with remaining dough, 1 tablespoon (14 grams) melted butter, and cheese mixture. Sprinkle any remaining cheese mixture onto dough in cups. Loosely cover dough with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until dough fills cups, 15 to 25 minutes.

9. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).

10. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water; brush onto dough.

11. Bake until lightly browned, 12 to 15 minutes. Let cool in pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes. Stir parsley into remaining melted butter; brush onto rolls. Serve warm.

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COOKIES, COWORKERS, AND COMPETITION

BAKING SCHOOL ALUM SUSAN FROST BRINGS THE HEAT AND THE TREATS TO HER ANNUAL OFFICE HOLIDAY BAKING CONTEST

You're known for creating some prize-winning cookies for your company's holiday baking contest. Tell us how you got involved in that.
SF: I work for the city of Livermore, California, and we've been doing this for probably 25 years, if not 30, at city hall. It's both a competition and a cookie exchange, and we all look forward to it every year. You sign up for the competition, and everyone gets a share of the cookies. Each of the competitors brings in four dozen cookies, and they pick different people every year to judge. You go around and pick up the other cookies, and you end up with dozens of different flavors and types of cookies. Everybody likes to have treats around the holidays, and it's really a lot of fun to get together and sample everybody's baking.

What made you want to participate in the competition?
SF: I like baking, and this was a chance to do some baking and see what other people are doing.

What recipes have you entered, and how did you place?
SF: I've entered different cookies, like chocolate chip, and I made a molasses spice cookie. One of my favorite recipes is a brown sugar cookie, so rather than using all white sugar, I use all brown sugar in it. I've competed probably 25 years since it started. I haven't won first place, but I have placed second and third.

What has been your biggest challenge facing this event?
SF: Usually, it's having to make such a large number of cookies. I think it started off as two dozen cookies and then more people participated, so then it was three dozen cookies. And now, it's four dozen. You know, that's a lot of cookies to make, particularly if your recipe only makes a dozen and half or two dozen cookies. It's the time, and making sure that I've got the time, to bake them. I know you could bake and then freeze the cookies ahead of time, but I like to either bake the morning of the contest or the day before.

Do you think you will be participating in future competitions?
SF: I'll continue to participate. I love being with the other ladies and gentlemen and getting together, enjoying each other's company and cookies. Winning isn't a big deal because it's so much fun to be there with everybody.

Would you ever consider doing other baking competitions?
SF: I probably would if an opportunity came up for that, but I just like to give something nice to my friends and coworkers. I've baked for my coworkers on their birthdays, so it gives me an opportunity to bake, and I know that most everyone prefers something home-baked. They appreciate people taking the time to bake for them.

bake FROM SCRATCH

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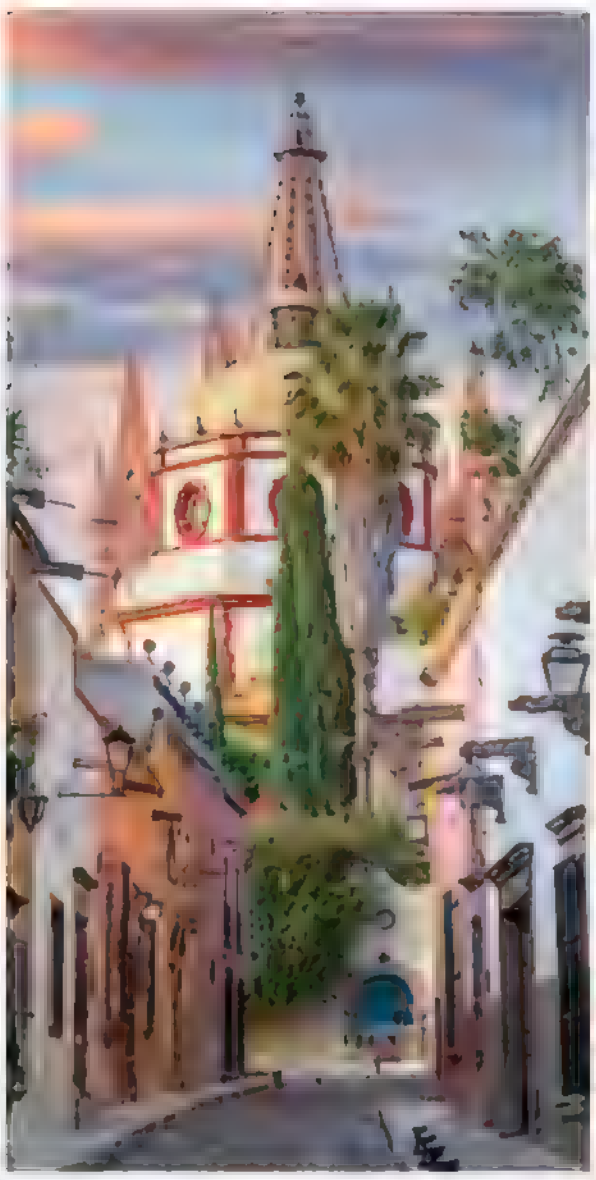
BAKING RETREATS

It's time to take an adventure the *Bake from Scratch* way.

Our 2024 baking retreats will satisfy the wanderlust cravings of the most intrepid bakers. You'll learn techniques from top baking instructors, travel to areas with rich culinary traditions, and make new baking friends along the way.



A DELICIOUS PREVIEW OF OUR RETREATS

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JANUARY 24-28

BRITISH BAKING IN BIRMINGHAM
WITH EDD KIMBER, WINNER OF SEASON 1 OF THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF

FEBRUARY 16-19

MACARON AND FRENCH BAKING IN BIRMINGHAM
WITH ANDREAS PITA OF LADUREE

MARCH 15-17

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE, MEXICO
APRIL 7-12

ITALY
MAY 1-10

IRELAND
SEPTEMBER 10-18

PROVENCE, FRANCE
SEPTEMBER 23-30

HOLIDAY BAKING IN BIRMINGHAM
NOVEMBER 1–3

NOVEMBER 15–17

SWITZERLAND
DECEMBER 6-11

More 2024 Baking Retreats to be announced soon!

For all of the delicious details on these retreats and to register, email *events@bakefromscratch.com*.
To stay up-to-date on our baking retreat announcements, sign up for our newsletter, PreHeat!

DOUGH-CABULARY TEST

CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THESE FUNDAMENTAL YEAST DOUGH TERMS

Lean and Enriched

A lean dough is the most basic type of yeast dough, and only the essentials—flour, water, salt, and yeast—are used to make it. Pizza doughs and French baguettes are classic examples of lean dough. Adding sugar or another sweetener, butter or another fat, milk or another dairy, or eggs to a lean dough makes it enriched. Think buttery brioche, pillowy challah, and melt-in-your-mouth cinnamon rolls.

Shaggy

When a recipe calls for mixing or kneading ingredients together until a "shaggy" dough forms, it should be lumpy or rough rather than smooth, yet well mixed, without any spots of dry ingredients peeking through.

Windowpane Test

Kneading dough to develop the gluten structure is an essential part of the majority of yeast dough recipes. But how do you know when you've kneaded enough? Enter the windowpane test: Pinch or cut—but don't tear, because this damages the gluten strands—a small, golf ball-size piece of dough. Then gently and slowly pull and rotate the dough out from its center. If the dough is properly kneaded, you will be able to stretch it—without tearing—until it's thin and translucent. If it tears or breaks during the stretch, give your dough another minute of work and then test again. If the dough is too hard to stretch, it's been overmixed.

Hydration

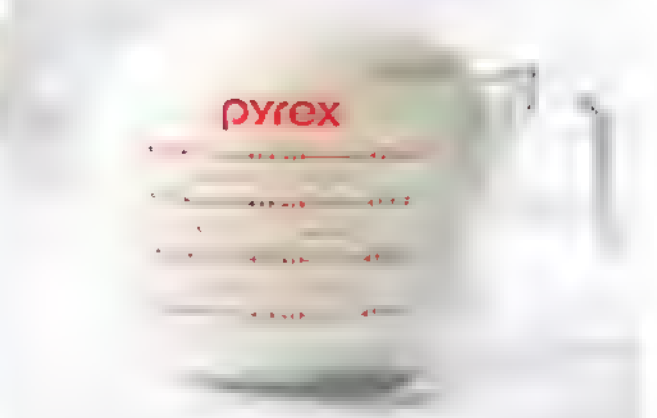
Hydration refers to the ratio of liquid to flour in a yeast dough and is calculated by taking the weight of liquid in a recipe and dividing it by the weight of flour to get a percentage (hydration = liquid weight ÷ flour weight). High-hydration doughs such as ciabatta and focaccia have really large air bubbles and an open crumb. Low-hydration doughs, such as bagels and pretzels, typically indicate 50% to 57% hydration; high hydration is usually 65% or higher.

Proofing

All yeast bread recipes need time for respiration, which is the process by which yeast can devour sugar and release carbon dioxide, also known as proofing. Yeast dies at temperatures above 130°F (54°C) and goes dormant at 40°F (4°C). For proofing dough, its ideal temperature is a balmy 75°F (24°C) to 80°F (27°C), somewhere draft-free. Too warm an environment and your dough will overproof; too cold and your dough will struggle to proof at all. Depending on the temperatures and conditions, your dough can rise for 1 to 2 hours. If the room is on the cooler side, it'll take a longer time to proof. Conversely, a hotter room equals a quicker proof. So, how do you know when it's ready? Enter the finger dent test.

Underproofed

Perfectly Proofed



Overproofed

Finger Dent Test

After your dough has rested for 40 minutes to 1 hour, lightly flour the surface of the dough, and gently press the pad of your finger about ½ inch into the surface. If your dough has properly proofed, you should be able to watch the dough spring back slightly but still show an indentation. Additionally, the dough has roughly doubled in size from its original amount. This is perfectly proofed dough. In underproofed dough, your finger dent will immediately spring back; the gluten is strong, but the carbon dioxide bubbles haven't expanded enough to allow the dough to rise to its full potential. This will produce pale, shrunken bread with less flavor. In overproofed dough, the finger dent never fills back in but stays firmly there like a stubborn dimple; the carbon dioxide bubbles have stretched the gluten past its limits and popped like burst balloons. Baked overproofed bread can deflate and produce a dense crumb, lacking proper gluten development.

Overdid it?

Even if you overmixed or overproofed your dough, go ahead with your recipe and bake it. The finished product will still be edible, and you don't want to throw away your time and money spent on ingredients. Plus, it's a learning opportunity for your next bake to be a success!

The Great 8-Cup

You've read it before in recipes, and you'll read it again: "until doubled in size." The best way to gauge this growth spurt? Use a glass 8-cup measuring cup. Once you add the dough to it, you can see exactly how much your dough expands by the marks on the side.

LORANN

GLUTEN-FREE & VEGAN PEPPERMINT CHOCOLATE YULE LOG

For Sponge Cake:

½ cup almond milk
1 teaspoon distilled white vinegar
1 cup gluten-free flour
¾ cup organic cane sugar
⅓ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
¼ cup cornstarch
¼ teaspoon LorAnn Xanthan Gum
1 teaspoon baking powder
¾ teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon finely ground sea salt
⅓ cup vegetable oil
⅓ cup unsweetened applesauce
1 teaspoon LorAnn Organic Madagascar Vanilla Extract
¼ cup hot coffee

For Peppermint Frosting:

1 ½ cups vegan butter sticks, room temperature
3-4 cups powdered sugar, sifted
½ cup almond milk, room temperature
1 teaspoon LorAnn Peppermint Bakery Emulsion
5 peppermint starlight candies, crushed and more for topping

For Chocolate Ganache:

6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons vegan butter
1 cup powdered sugar, sifted
3 tablespoons hot coffee

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a 10 x 15-inch baking sheet with parchment paper and non-stick spray and then set aside.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the almond milk and vinegar and set aside.
3. Whisk together the dry ingredients. Add in oil, applesauce, vanilla, and the almond milk and vinegar mixture, and stir until a batter forms. Slowly add in the hot coffee and mix until incorporated.
4. Transfer the batter to the lined baking sheet and spread it out in an even layer. Tap the baking sheet on the counter a few times to remove any air bubbles. Bake for 16-18 minutes.
5. Once out of the oven, dust the cake with powdered sugar. Place a piece of parchment paper over it, and invert it (flip) onto a cooling rack.
6. Remove the top layer of parchment paper and carefully roll up the cake using the parchment paper on the bottom.
7. To make frosting, beat butter at medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar, beating mixture until light and fluffy. Add almond milk and peppermint emulsion and beat until it's at a spreading consistency. Fold in peppermint pieces.
8. Gently unroll the cake and spread a thick layer of frosting on it and roll the cake back up.
9. Prepare chocolate ganache by placing the chocolate and butter into a microwave-safe bowl and cook on high for 30 seconds, stir until smooth. Whisk in the powdered sugar and coffee.
10. Frost the cake entirely with ganache, and use a fork to create lines like a log. Top with crushed peppermint candies and chill cake in the refrigerator for at least 1 hour before serving.

Enjoy

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PRIDE IN PRUNE CAKE

Recipes are so often a source of happy memories of loved ones who have passed and are a way of continuing their life and honoring their legacy. Grandma's Prune Cake, shared by longtime *Bake from Scratch* reader Brenda Slate, does exactly that.

"This prune cake recipe goes way back in my family," Brenda says. "We never really questioned where it came from. I've been investigating, and it has been an interesting journey!"

A GRANDMOTHER'S SIMPLE YET SOPHISTICATED CAKE IS SHARED TO INSPIRE AND TO ENJOY

One possible source of where Brenda's grandmother Florence Jane Harvell got the recipe is a bag of sugar. "Believe it or not, I found an Imperial Sugar recipe booklet from the 1930s online, and our prune cake recipe is very close to a recipe in it," explains Brenda. "I think my grandma 'baked it her own' because none of the prune cakes I've found have coffee in them like ours does. Long before Starbucks came around, I remember her making coffee drinks, and she put coffee in things anytime she could."

While this dessert is a spice cake at heart, the prunes give it a big boost of moisture and a caramelly sweetness. Strongly brewed coffee in the cake batter and espresso powder in the glaze complement and enchance the cinnamon and allspice. Glazing just the top of the layers—which is how Florence always made it—rather than covering the entire cake in a frosting makes an elegantly simple finish.

"I am all for any chance I get to talk about my grandma," Brenda says. "She was so much fun, and when cooking or baking, she measured everything with her hands. When my mother came into the family, my grandma really loved her and taught her a lot in the kitchen, and so they became the hosts of dinners."

And this prune cake was as much of a family tradition as the get-togethers themselves. "We always had Grandma's Prune Cake for Thanksgiving and family dinners. All my cousins and I looked forward to it," Brenda recalls. Continuing the "bake it your own" tradition that began with her grandma, Brenda adds a personal touch to the cake for Thanksgiving by using a stencil and cocoa powder to create a beautiful pumpkin decoration on the cake while the glaze is still warm.

Brenda tells us that she loved the prune cake so much that when she was in third grade, she wanted to share it with her classmates for the holidays. Unfortunately for her (and her class!), she never got the chance, but she's excited to share it now. "Maybe someone out there will have memories brought back about their own grandmother," Brenda says.

Passing on decades of treasured time spent with family, the memory of Florence Jane lives on with every bite of her simply delicious cake.

GRANDMA'S PRUNE CAKE

Makes 1 (9-inch) cake

Recipe adapted from Florence Jane Harvell and Brenda Slate

With warming spices and the subtle sweetness of prunes, this cake is the epitome of simple, delicious home baking.

Cake:

- **1 cup (193 grams) pitted prunes, chopped**

Boiling water

- **1 cup (227 grams) all-vegetable shortening**
- **2 cups (400 grams) granulated sugar**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams)**
- **3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking soda, divided**
- **1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cinnamon**
- **1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground allspice**
- **1 cup (240 grams) strong brewed coffee, cooled**

Glaze:

- **2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter**
- **2½ cups (300 grams) confectioners' sugar, sifted**
- **1 teaspoon (2 grams) instant espresso powder**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon (35 grams) whole milk**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**

Garnish: whole prunes

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray 2 (9-inch) round cake pans with cooking spray. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper.

2. For cake: In a small heatproof bowl, add prunes and boiling water to cover; reserve.

3. In the bowl of stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat shortening and granulated sugar at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

4. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, salt, baking powder, ½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking soda, cinnamon, and allspice. In a liquid-measuring cup, combine coffee and remaining ½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to shortening mixture alternately with coffee mixture, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl.

5. Drain prunes; stir into batter. Divide batter between prepared pans.

6. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 45 to 50 minutes. Let cool in pans for 15 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire racks, and gently remove parchment. Let cool completely.

7. For glaze: In a small microwave-safe bowl, heat butter on high until melted; whisk in confectioners' sugar, espresso powder, and salt until smooth and well combined. Whisk in milk and vanilla until mixture is smooth and thick but pourable.

8. Place 1 cooled cake layer on a serving plate. Pour ½ cup (169 grams) glaze onto cake layer. Top with remaining cake layer. Pour remaining glaze on top, letting it drip down sides of cake. Garnish with prunes, if desired. Let stand until glaze is set before serving, 10 to 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

from the pantry

CRANBERRIES

EMBRACING THE WONDER OF THE CRANBERRY

BY AMBER WILSON
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY DONNA NICHOLS

There's nothing quite like this time of year. There's solace in the sound of stepping across grass glazed with the season's first frost, a fire sputtering away in the fireplace, and the crackle of a gilded wrapper revealing a single sumptuous marron glacé (candied chestnut). Fall and winter baking herald in clouds of cinnamon and sugar, smooth baked custards, gloriously spiced mincemeat, and the cool scent of peppermint paired with chocolate. Heady aromas welcome us like paper-wrapped presents: cinnamon, vanilla, cardamom, ginger, and cloves. The air is redolent with notes of maple syrup, molasses-imbued brown sugar, spicy gingerbread, and, of course, the tart, sweet scent of cranberries simmering away on the stove.

Cranberries are grown in a handful of states in the US, including Massachusetts, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Washington, and Oregon. Like many species of plants native to North America, the cranberry is specially adapted to wetlands. The roots of their vines typically are established at the water's edge, taking advantage of the rich soils created by alternating peat, sand, clay, and gravel layers. It takes about three years for the plants to start producing fruit, and canberries grown commercially in bogs are flodded in early winter and springtime to safeguard them from frost.

Autumn is when cranberries reach their peak flavor and color and are, therefore, harvested. There are two methods for harvesting cranberries: wet and dry. For wet harvesting, the vines are submerged in water, and a mechanical harvester is driven through to knock the berries off the vines. The cranberries, which float since they contain four small internal air pockets, are then skimmed off the water's surface. Wet-harvested berries are processed for beloved sauces, dried cranberries, and many other delights. Cranberries spotted at farmers' markets or in the produce section of the grocery store are dry harvested. For this, a mechanical picker combs the cranberries off the vines and deposits them in bags to be sold fresh. Fresh cranberries are available from early fall through late winter thanks to their long shelf life.

Cranberries are tart and complex, with a slightly bitter flavor. Their acidity makes them a pleasant accompaniment to roasted meats and beautifully suited to every aspect of any rich meal. The relatively dry nature of the acidic berries also turns them into sponges for absorbing sweetness without becoming cloying.

When buying cranberries, look at the fruit's skin to determine freshness. The ideal cranberry is shiny and plump, with taut skin and a deep red color. (The more intense the color, the more concentrated the beneficial vitamins and nutrients are!) A truly fresh cranberry is firm to the touch and will bounce against a surface when dropped; you'll want to avoid bags with brown or shriveled berries at the bottom.

Sugared Cranberries

Fresh cranberries must be kept cold, so the fridge is the perfect space to stash them. They'll keep in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks or in the freezer for up to 1 year. Freezing lets you capture the fruit's flavor and vibrant color while enjoying fresh cranberry recipes year-round. They're a great substitute for fresh cranberries and can be used in recipes without thawing. To freeze, simply sort and rinse fresh cranberries under cold water and drain them in a colander. Spread them on a kitchen towel, and let them dry for 10 to 15 minutes. Spread the berries in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet, and freeze, uncovered, until they're solid, about 2 hours. Transfer the solid cranberries to heavy-duty resealable plastic bags, and immediately return them to the freezer. This method ensures the cranberries won't clump together, and that's important because it lets you take out exactly the amount of fruit you need for a recipe.

Besides fresh cranberries, you can purchase them frozen, canned, or dried. Dried cranberries are a lovely, tart substitute for recipes that traditionally include raisins, and they make a beautiful addition to scones, cookies, cakes, muffins, and much more! When baking with dried cranberries, you'll sometimes need to reconstitute them by soaking them in hot water (or another liquid, like orange juice or apple cider) for around 20 minutes, draining, and then adding them to your recipe.

Let's talk about that iconic scarlet cranberry sauce! Whether treated as an essential side dish or a cheering component on a charcuterie board, spread on a much-loved leftover turkey sandwich, or added to the pan juices of your favorite roast for the most divine gravy ever, cranberry sauce is the sweet-tart crowning glory at any merry meal. Yes, the canned variety has a loyal following, but if you want to try something equally delicious and elegant, we've got you covered! Consider making a homemade gelatin-infused cranberry sauce and letting it set in a beautiful Bundt pan. Just coat all the cracks and crevices of your favorite Bundt pan with cooking spray to make for an easy and clean unmolding. Pour in your cranberry sauce, loosely cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate overnight. To unmold, dip the pan in a bowl of warm water. Let stand for 30 seconds and then remove the pan from the water and carefully run a small offset spatula around the edges of the pan to loosen it. Place a serving platter upside down on top of the pan, invert the platter and pan together, and shake gently. With the addition of gelatin, it wobbles like the canned variety you know and love but with a grand presentation suited for your holiday feast!

Sugared cranberries add glittering festivity to anything they rest upon. Not only do they add festive flair but they are also straightforward to make and provide fresh acidity to rich desserts. You can also serve these frosted jewels as a garnish for a cheerful cocktail. These beauties are a breeze to make. Simply heat ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar and ½ cup (120 grams) water in a small saucepan over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Let the syrup cool a bit (you don't want it to be so hot that it bursts the berries!) and gently stir 1 cup (250 grams) fresh cranberries into the syrup. Remove the cranberries from the syrup with a slotted spoon, and let the excess syrup drip off. Place the cranberries in a single layer on a parchment paper-lined rimmed baking sheet, and let them dry for 1 hour. Finally, roll the cranberries in granulated sugar until coated, and let them stand until they're dry, about 1 more hour. Voilà! You've got a trove of sparkly cranberries! Top a frosted layer cake or pumpkin pie, vanilla-scented cupcakes, or a bûche de Noël with sparkling cranberries for instant showstoppers! They are also dazzling scattered across a basic Bundt cake, bread pudding, pancakes, and waffles. A batch of these glistening cranberries can transform anything from ordinary to magical!

With these simple instructions, you, too, can make the most out of the cherished cranberry. May they appear at your seasonal table with more glowing festivity than ever—with their gorgeous garnet glossiness exuding the irrepressible sparkle of the holidays.

BAKE WITH CRANBERRIES

In this issue, don't miss:

Blueberry-Cranberry Meringue Pie, **page 38**
Five-Spice Cranberry-Pecan Rolls, **page 78**
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Lady Baltimore Cake, **page 105**
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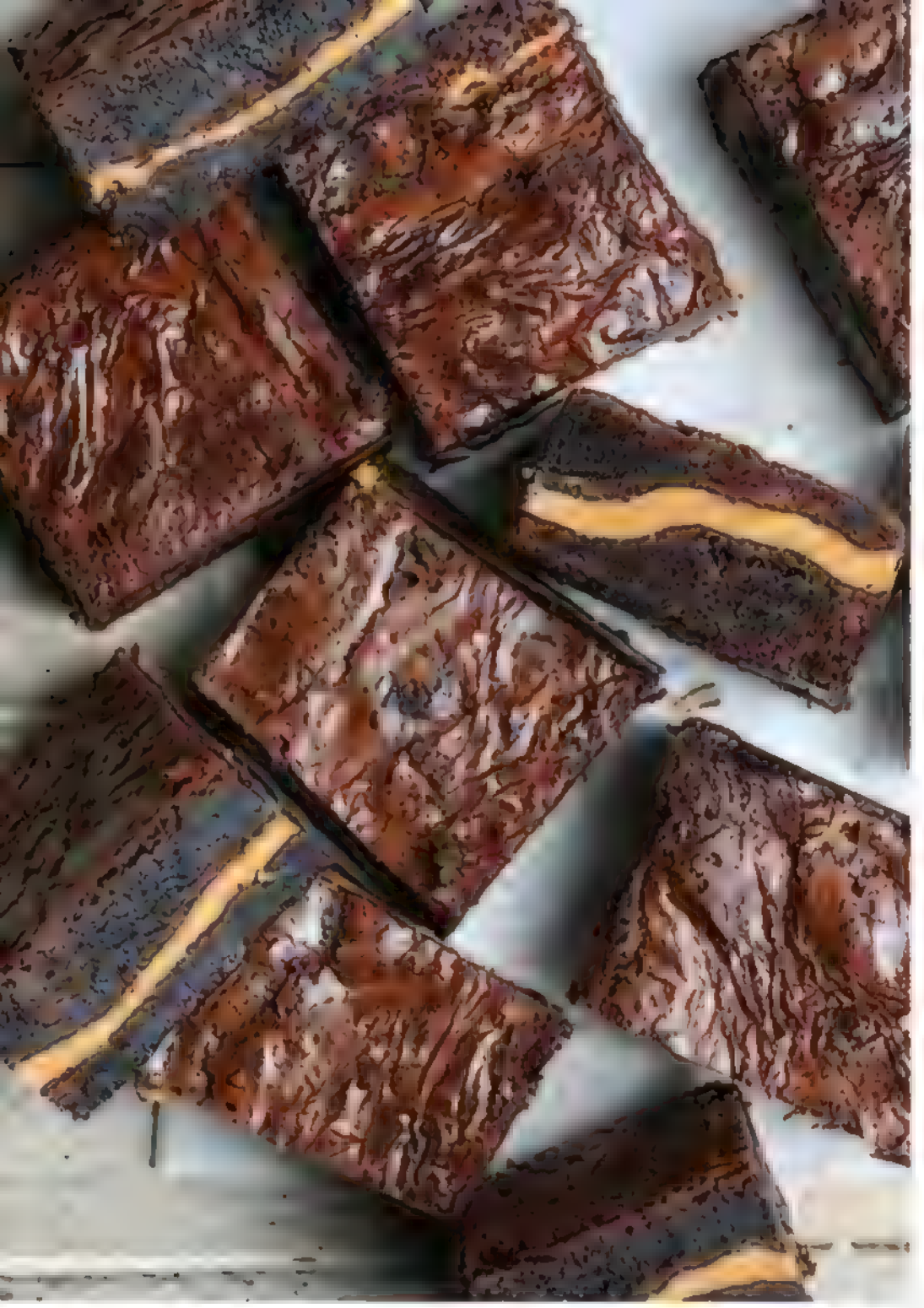
BY SHARING HER PASSION FOR BAKING, SAM, CREATOR OF *BUTTERMILK BY SAM*, WANTS TO INSPIRE YOU TO FEARLESSLY EXPERIMENT IN YOUR KITCHEN

BY AMBER WILSON

LIFE IS BETTER WITH BUTTERMILK



The kitchen has always been an enchanting space for Sam. She recalls, as a child, watching her mother whip up batches of chocolate chip cookies as she eagerly waited for the promise of licking dough-covered beaters. Her love of baking developed and transformed into the beloved blog *Buttermilk by Sam*.

Sam's baking journey began as a teenager. "I made my first chocolate cake when I was 16 years old. It was a light, tender, and delicious buttermilk chocolate cake that became *the* cake requested by my family for birthdays. I still make that recipe today, and I love it dearly."

Her passion for baking grew more profound when she went away to Colorado State University to study politics. "I began baking for social events—baking countless blueberry muffins for girls' night and beautiful cakes for department events. There were these chocolate chip cookies I'd make with margarine and milk chocolate that immediately found a dedicated fan base among friends," she shares.

"While in school, one of my favorite jobs was working at an Italian-style café as a *gelatiere*. Late at night, I found myself in the back of the kitchen experimenting and creating new flavors for the café. It wasn't until after I received my graduate degree from Georgetown University that I began baking more intently and attempting to develop my own recipes. As I got older and gained more confidence in my baking abilities, I'd try changing a few crucial ingredients or steps in a recipe or not following one at all. This is the part of baking I really fell in love with—pushing boundaries to see what I could do differently to get a surprising, exciting result."

After earning her master's degree, Sam went on to work at a think tank, but dreams of baking were always a sweet diversion. "When I was asked as a kid what my dream job was, I'd always say I wanted to open a bakery," confesses Sam, "but I never imagined baking would be my profession. It was in the periphery of my days as a Middle East politics analyst with a focus on women and gender. My days were spent interviewing activists, pouring over research journals, and writing. During that time, I wasn't fulfilled by the work, and I often found myself distracted by chocolate-swirled loaves of babka, muffins that perfectly domed, and chewy chocolate chunk cookies."

Sam made a massive—and beautifully rewarding—life change after her first daughter was born. "When my daughter was a toddler, I wrestled with the idea of returning to the kind of work I did before having a family. I have four younger brothers, so I know from experience those early years go by so fast. I wanted to soak up our time together before she started school. But I also wanted to do something to challenge myself mentally and channel my desire to create and produce. I took food photography lessons while my daughter napped, got a cottage food license, and made my site, *Buttermilk by Sam*. (The name came from my love of buttermilk, as it's one of my favorite baking ingredients!) I was already a passionate self-taught baker with some professional baking experience from taking classes from trained chefs, but most of my learning has come from experimenting in my own kitchen. I'm a very hands-on, visual learner. I need to feel and see a process for me to grasp it," Sam explains.

"For a short period of time, there was a section on my site that featured a small 'menu' of baked goods I was selling and another section for recipes I wanted to share. Two things happened concurrently: I realized I didn't want to bake the same things over and over again, and my Instagram gained a following of people interested in the blog's recipes. The 'menu' disappeared within a year of creating my site, and the recipes took over. It's been that way since!"

Sam's recipes beautifully and seamlessly blend her creativity, family life, and cultural background: "I am half-Arab and grew up eating Middle Eastern, South Asian, and East African food alongside my mother's American-style cooking. My recipes often show ingredients like pomegranate, labneh, or sumac. I love using my favorite childhood flavors in Western-style baking. You'll find dishes like pumpkin honeycomb bread, za'atar bagels, or lemon baklava on my blog," she says.

"My recipes often have a twist you wouldn't expect. I like to innovate and work with nontraditional combinations and methods. You will find some classics, like your next favorite butter cake or chocolate chip cookie. Still, you'll find yourself challenged to try something new: laminating cinnamon rolls, stuffing cookies with a fruit curd, caramelizing white chocolate, baking with pomegranates, or maybe you'll try a cake made with black cocoa!"

Sam has been in pursuit of inspiring others in the kitchen for many years now, and this is her greatest baking advice: "Don't be afraid of failure. If a recipe is new to you or you have little baking experience, the bake probably won't turn out as pictured or as you imagine it, and that's OK. It's better than OK—it's a learning opportunity. Ask yourself, what went wrong and why? These little lessons you pick up from 'failures' become the building blocks for becoming a better baker. Enjoy the process!"

FOLLOW ALONG WITH SAM
@buttermilkbysam
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BLUEBERRY-CRANBERRY MERINGUE PIE

Makes 1 (9-inch) pie

Recipe courtesy of Buttermilk by Sam

Housed in a flaky, all-butter pie crust is a two-berry curd: tart cranberry and sweet blueberry. The curd is silky and lush and atop it sits a naturally fuchsia colored meringue.

Butter Pie Crust:

- 1½ cups (187 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon (6 grams) fine sea salt
- 1 tablespoon (12 grams) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter cold and sliced
- 5 tablespoons (75 grams) cold water

Blueberry Cranberry Curd:

- 6 ounces (170 grams) fresh cranberries
- 1 cup (156 grams) blueberries fresh or frozen (get juicy ones!)
- ¼ cup (60 grams) freshly squeezed lime juice
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs plus 2 large yolks (86 grams)
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter

Blueberry Cranberry Meringue:

- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (120 grams) 100% pure cranberry juice
- 4 large egg whites (120 grams)
- 2 tablespoons (14 grams) blueberry powder from ground freeze-dried blueberries*
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) pure vanilla extract

1. Make the pie crust: Whisk together the flour, sugar and salt. Cut in the butter with a pastry knife until kidney-bean sized. Add the water and stir with a spatula, then use your hands to gather the dough into a ball (it will take quite a few turns). Wrap it in plastic wrap and chill for 2 hours or up to 48.

2. Par-bake the pie crust: Roll out the cold crust on a lightly floured surface until it's at least 3 inches wider than your rimmed 9-inch metal pie pan. Lay it over the pan and trim so you have an even edge. Fold the dough over on the edges and use your thumb on one hand and thumb and index finger on the other hand to crimp the crust. Set it to chill until hard, at least an hour in the fridge.

3. Preheat the oven to 400°F/204°C and set the pie on a cookie sheet (in case any pastry falls off or butter leaks). Cover the whole pie with foil, wrapping it around the edges to protect the crimped edges. Fill all the way to rim with pie weights (or dried beans).

4. Bake crust until deep golden for about 20 to 25 minutes then remove the weights and foil.

5. Make the curd: In a pot set the cranberries, blueberries and lime juice to cook for about 10 minutes, until the berries all pop and it's mostly liquid, you can use an immersion blender here to further get the berries mashed. Press through a fine mesh sieve and discard bits. Return the berry mixture to the pot (it should be cleaned of any bits) and add the sugar, cook until sugar dissolves. Set the eggs and yolks in a bowl and add just a bit of the berry mix and whisk. Then slowly add more of the mix and whisk. Now pour all the egg mixture into the berry mix and whisk to combine. This is to temper the eggs. Cook the mixture until thick, stirring as it cooks. When it's thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, it's done. Turn the heat off and whisk in the butter.

6. Bake the pie: Pour the curd through a fine mesh sieve into the par-baked crust (in case there are any bits). Bake the pie at 350°F/177°C for 10 to 15 minutes, or until the curd is set on the edges and it only jiggles slightly in the center. Chill the pie for at least a few hours before making the meringue.

7. Make the meringue: Set the egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment. In a pot, combine the sugar and cranberry juice and set over medium heat. Clip a candy thermometer to the pot. Cook until the temperature reaches 250°F, the candy stage. Begin whipping the egg whites slowly while the liquid cools for a minute or two, then with the mixer on low and whipping, slowly pour in the liquid. Once it's all in, turn the mixer up to medium speed and whip for 5 to 10 minutes, or until the meringue holds stiff peaks. (You can take the whisk out and the meringue holds its shape.) Toward the end, add the blueberry powder and the vanilla. Dollop the meringue on top of the pie or use a piping tip to make a pretty design.

8. If kept in the fridge, the meringue will hold shape for a day. Torch the pie before serving, if desired.

**Grind freeze-dried blueberries into a powder and then sieve them to remove the larger bits. You'll want to do at least half a cup of berries to make sure you get enough powder.*

BEAUTIFULLY BRAIDED AND SEASONALLY SPICED

CHOCK-FULL OF FRAGRANT SPICES AND BOLD FLAVORS AND TWISTED TO PERFECTION, THESE FESTIVE BREADS WILL HELP YOU RING IN THE HOLIDAYS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER / RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE / FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD / STYLING BY MARY BETH JONES

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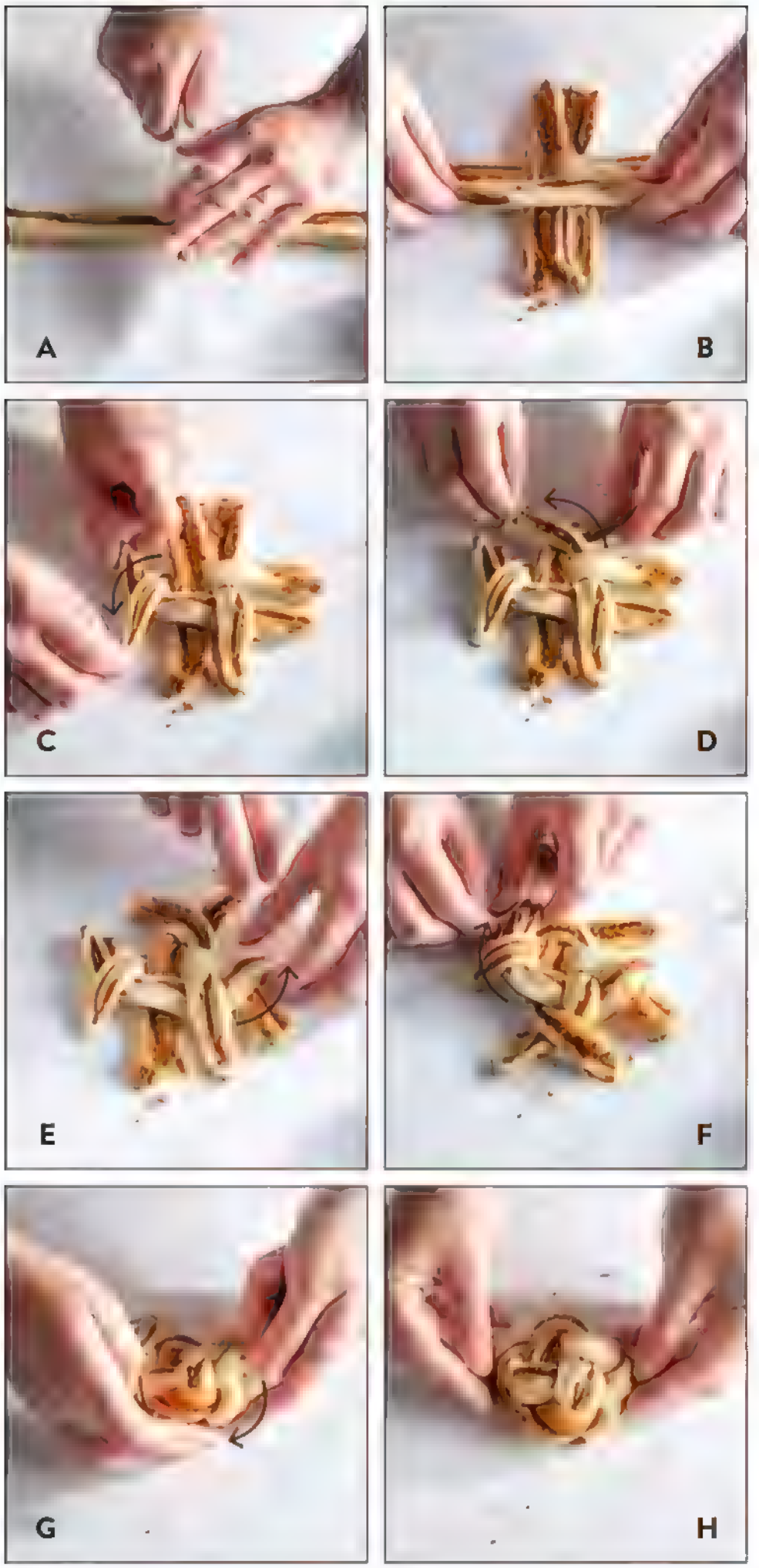


SHAPING

As you work through crossing the strands and moving in a clockwise direction, a loose round will begin to take shape. Once you've crossed all the strands, tuck the final ends under to create a nice round.

Looking for more spectacular bread recipes? Head to *bakefromscratch.com* and check out our Bread Box collection!

SPICED SUGAR TWISTS

Makes 10 rolls

There's nothing like the aroma of warm spices filling the kitchen during the holidays. Sweet strands weave together in these sophisticated knots that elevate simple flavors into eye-catching treats.

2½ teaspoons (5 grams) ground cinnamon
1¼ teaspoons (2.5 grams) ground nutmeg
¾ teaspoon (1.5 grams) ground cardamom
¾ teaspoon (1.5 grams) ground allspice
⅔ cup (165 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
Do-It-All Dough (recipe on opposite page)
All-purpose flour, for dusting
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 tablespoon (15 grams) water
⅓ cup (66 grams) granulated sugar
3 tablespoons (42 grams) unsalted butter, melted

1. In a small bowl, whisk together cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, and allspice.
2. In a medium bowl, stir together brown sugar and room temperature butter until smooth and combined. Reserve 1 tablespoon (6 grams) cinnamon mixture; stir remaining cinnamon mixture into sugar mixture until combined.
3. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Punch down Do-It-All Dough, and let stand for 5 minutes. Divide dough into 10 portions (about 95 grams each). On a clean surface, roll 1 portion into an 8x4-inch rectangle. Spread 1½ tablespoons (22 grams) sugar mixture onto rectangle, leaving a ⅛-inch border along one long side. Starting at long side without border, roll up dough into a log, and press edge to seal. Roll dough into a rope about 14 inches long, dusting work surface with flour as needed.
5. Cut rope in half lengthwise to create 2 strands; cut each strand in half crosswise (**A**). Place the 4 strands, cut side up, in a hashtag pattern (over, under, over, under) (**B**). Working clockwise, cross each bottom strand over the strand next to it (**C** and **D**). Repeat crossing procedure with remaining bottom strands (**E**). After all 4 sides have been crossed, cross 1 new top strand under adjacent strand (**F**). Repeat crossing procedure with remaining new top strands (**G**). Tuck ends under to shape into a round, and place on prepared pan (**H**). Repeat procedure with remaining dough portions and remaining sugar mixture. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 30 to 45 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
7. In another small bowl, whisk together egg and 1 tablespoon (15 grams) water. Brush egg wash onto rolls.
8. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 15 to 20 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking.
9. In a small bowl, stir together reserved cinnamon mixture and granulated sugar. Brush melted butter onto hot rolls; sprinkle with spiced sugar. Let cool on pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes. Serve warm. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

Do-It-All Dough

Makes 10 to 12 rolls or 1 (16-inch) wreath

¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk
½ cup (120 grams) water
⅓ cup (75 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
4 to 4¼ cups (500 to 531 grams) all-purpose flour, divided
2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar
1 tablespoon (9 grams) kosher salt
1 (0.25-ounce) package (7 grams) active dry yeast*
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature

1. In a medium saucepan, heat milk and ½ cup (120 grams) water over medium heat to scalding. (An instant-read thermometer should register 180°F/82°C.) Remove from heat, and add butter; stir occasionally until butter is melted and an instant-read thermometer registers 120°F (49°C) to 130°F (54°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, combine 2 cups (250 grams) flour, sugar, salt, and yeast. Add warm milk mixture, and beat at low speed until combined. Add egg, beating until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add 2 cups (250 grams) flour, beating just until a shaggy dough comes together and stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at low speed until a soft, somewhat sticky dough forms, about 24 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl and dough hook; add up to remaining ¼ cup (31 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if dough is too sticky. Turn out dough onto a clean surface; knead 5 to 6 times, and shape into a smooth round.
4. Lightly oil a large bowl. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

**We used Red Star® Active Dry Yeast.*

Note: *This may seem like a long time to mix, but your stand mixer can handle the workload since it's on a low speed.*

MINCEMEAT WREATH

Makes 1 (16-inch) wreath

The history of mincemeat itself is as rich as this fruit-filled bread. Mincemeat was first created as a method of preserving meat, but around the 19th century, the meat was left out, and eventually, it became the fruity mixture known today. The history of mince wreaths and pies can be traced back to the Crusades, around the 11th to 13th centuries. European Crusaders brought back spices, fruits, and meats to England from the Middle East. Making mince pies was tacked on to Christmas celebrations, and the pies were made to resemble Jesus in the manger, with a small doughy "baby" in the center. The cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg symbolize the three gifts the Magi brought to honor the birth of Jesus. As mincemeat recipes changed with the omission of meat, a lot of religious symbolism was lost from it as well. However, some traditions can't be erased, so enjoy a slice of this braided beauty on each day of the 12 days of Christmas for the good luck that it's said to bring.

Do-It-All Dough (recipe precedes)
⅔ cup (147 grams) firmly packed dark brown sugar
1 medium apple (200 grams), peeled and finely chopped
⅔ cup (107 grams) raisins
½ cup (77 grams) candied orange peel, finely chopped
½ cup (66 grams) dried currants
¼ cup (60 grams) water
3 tablespoons (45 grams) brandy
2 teaspoons (2 grams) orange zest
1 teaspoon (1 gram) lemon zest
2 teaspoons (10 grams) fresh lemon juice
1½ teaspoons (3 grams) ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground coriander
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground allspice
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
All-purpose flour, for dusting
3 tablespoons (60 grams) apricot preserves

1. Line a small baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Lightly punch down Do-It-All Dough. Press into a 10x6-inch rectangle, and transfer to prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
3. In a large bowl, combine brown sugar, apple, raisins, candied orange peel, currants, ¼ cup (60 grams) water, brandy, orange zest, lemon zest and juice, cinnamon, coriander, nutmeg, allspice, and cloves. Cover and let stand for 1 hour.
4. Transfer sugar mixture to a medium saucepan; bring to a boil over medium-low heat, stirring frequently until sugar dissolves. Cook, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from heat, and let cool slightly. Cover and refrigerate until cold, at least 1 hour or up to overnight.
5. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and roll into a 16x11-inch rectangle, with one long side closest you. Spread fruit mixture onto dough, leaving a ¼-inch border on all sides. Starting with one long side, roll up dough into a tight log, and pinch seam to seal. Place roll, seam side down, on work surface. Using a bench scraper or sharp knife, cut roll in half lengthwise; turn halves cut side up. Carefully cross strands over each other to create an "X" shape. Twist top half of "X" twice; repeat with bottom half of "X." Place a sheet of parchment paper on work surface. Carefully move twist to parchment, shaping into a wreath, and tuck ends under. Transfer wreath on parchment to a rimless baking sheet. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes.
6. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers at least 190°F (88°C), 30 to 40 minutes.
8. In a small microwave-safe bowl, heat preserves on high until fluid, about 30 seconds. Using a pastry brush, brush preserves onto hot wreath. Let cool on pan for 15 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days, or refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.

PRO TIP You can substitute 1 (27-ounce) jar prepared mincemeat for the cooled cooked fruit mixture that's prepared in steps 3 and 4.

the essential...
BAKED CUSTARDS
BAKED CUSTARDS HAVE THE POWER TO UPLIFT THE SPIRIT, AS THEY ARE DIVINELY COMFORTING AND DELICIOUS WITH EVERY SILKY-SMOOTH SPOONFUL

Custards are timeless, elegant, and always enchanting, with their thick, sweet, satiny smoothness that has been enjoyed throughout history. There is a record of custard existing since the days of ancient Rome. In the Middle Ages, custards were commonly used alongside pastries to make tarts. The word "custard" comes from the French word *croustado*, an Old Provençal word meaning "something covered with crust."

Baked custards are easy to love, with their thick, sweet, delicate mouthfeel, but making them can incite fear in even the most experienced home bakers. Rest assured as we walk you through our step-by-step process, which will leave you completely confident in mastering these versatile and deeply satisfying baked custards—from our brandy-spiked, nutmeg-spiced *pots de crème* to our almond-kissed chocolate-amaretti Italian *bunet* and the ever-classic and always-refined flan—that are sure to dazzle at your holiday table. Reveling in these irresistible custards is downright decadent, and it's Christmastime after all! Indulgence is a celebration of being alive, and what better time to celebrate than during the holidays? You and your loved ones will be rewarded with every cool, creamy, velvety spoonful.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY MAGGIE HILL

EGGNOG POTS DE CRÈME

Makes 6 custards

Pot de crème is a classic French dessert that dates back to the 17th century, and the name refers to the traditional ornate porcelain lidded cups the custard bakes in as well as the custard itself. These days, pots de crème are typically baked in small ramekins or ovenproof glass jars. With a blend of half-and-half, sugar, and egg yolks, this wonderfully spiced custard envelops your mouth in a luscious way, leaving you with all the merry flavors of eggnog—brandy, vanilla, and nutmeg. These are ideal for holiday entertaining, as everything can be done in advance and are served chilled and spooned right out of the vessels they are baked in. Just before your guests arrive, crown with vanilla-kissed whipped cream and dust with nutmeg for one final festive flourish.

- **6 large egg yolks (114 grams), room temperature**
- **¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar**
- **1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract, divided**
- **¾ teaspoon (1.5 grams) ground nutmeg**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **2½ cups (600 grams) half-and-half, room temperature**
- **1 tablespoon (15 grams) brandy**
- **½ cup (120 grams) cold heavy whipping cream**
- **¼ cup (30 grams) confectioners' sugar**
- **Garnish: ground nutmeg**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, granulated sugar, 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla, nutmeg, and salt.
3. In a medium saucepan, heat half-and-half and brandy over medium heat until mixture just begins to steam. (Do not boil.) Gradually add hot half-and-half mixture to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Strain custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup, discarding any solids.
4. Divide custard among 6 (4-ounce) ovenproof glass jars (about ½ cup or 130 grams each). Place jars in a roasting pan or 13x9-inch baking pan; add hot water to pan come 1 inch up sides of jars. Loosely cover pan with foil.
5. Bake until custards are set but centers jiggle when jars are gently shaken and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 50 to 55 minutes. Carefully transfer jars to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Refrigerate, uncovered, until cold and set, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.
6. In another medium bowl, whisk together cold cream, confectioners' sugar, and remaining ½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla until medium-stiff peaks form. Spoon onto cold custards. Garnish with nutmeg, if desired. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Time to Temper

1. In a medium saucepan, heat half-and-half and brandy over medium heat until mixture just begins to steam. (Do not boil.) Gradually add hot half-and-half mixture to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Strain custard through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup, discarding any solids. When it comes to custards, tempering involves slowly and carefully adding the hot liquid in a steady stream to the egg yolks while constantly whisking to gradually raise their temperature without scrambling the yolks. This dilutes the proteins in the yolks as they unravel and firm up, preventing them from clumping together tightly. This helps create a velvety base for the custard. Straining helps remove any bits of curdled egg from the custard so your final product is silky and smooth. Let the custard pass through the sieve by shaking it softly or stirring gently with a spoon to help move things along. Pressing the custard will force those curdled bits through the sieve, ruining the custard's satiny texture.

Bain-Marie and Bake

1. Divide custard among 6 (4-ounce) ovenproof glass jars (about ½ cup or 130 grams each). Place jars in a 13x9-inch baking pan or roasting pan; add hot water to come 1 inch up sides of jars. Loosely cover pan with foil. A water bath, also known as a bain-marie, helps control and evenly distribute heat around the custard as it bakes. This encourages slow and steady coagulation of the eggs, which keeps the texture silky and smooth and helps prevent the custard from splitting.

2. Bake until custards are set but centers jiggle when jars are gently shaken and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 50 to 55 minutes. Carefully transfer jars to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Refrigerate, uncovered, until cold and set, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight. You'll know the custard is ready to come out of the oven when you gently jostle the vessel you're baking the custard in and the custard appears set around the edges while the inside remains jiggly. Remember, the custard will continue to firm up as it chills in the refrigerator.

The Crowning Glory

1. In another medium bowl, whisk together cold cream, confectioners' sugar, and remaining ½ teaspoon (2 grams) vanilla until medium-stiff peaks form. Top cold custards with whipped cream mixture. Garnish with nutmeg, if desired. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. The small of amount of cornstarch in confectioners' sugar helps stabilize the whipped cream.

CHOCOLATE-AMARETTI BUNET

Makes 1 (9x5-inch) custard

Bunet (also known as bonet) is a creamy, decadent custard dessert from the Piemonte region in northern Italy. This custard is like a crème caramel but enhanced with chocolate, almond extract, and amaretti cookies. Using the amaretti cookies as a garnish enhances the almond flavor while adding a lovely crunch to the velvety custard. This luxurious Italian dessert makes for a unique showstopper that will surely please anyone with a sweet tooth this holiday season.

- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, divided
- 3 tablespoons (45 grams) water
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- 2 ounces (57 grams) bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled
- 1½ cups (360 grams) half-and-half
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) almond extract
- ¾ cup (40 grams) amaretti cookies, lightly crushed
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Garnish: amaretti cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. In a small saucepan, bring ½ cup (100 grams) sugar and 3 tablespoons (45 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until mixture turns a deep amber color, about 5 minutes. Use a pastry brush dipped in water to dissolve any sugar that sticks to side of pan. Immediately pour caramel into a 9x5-inch nonstick metal loaf pan. Holding only top edges of pan, carefully swirl caramel in pan so bottom is evenly coated. (Bottom of pan will become hot; be sure to use a towel, pot holder, or trivet under pan to protect countertop.)
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together eggs and remaining ½ cup (100 grams) sugar until thick and pale. Whisk in melted chocolate.
4. In another small saucepan, heat half-and-half and almond extract over medium-low heat just until mixture begins to steam. (Do not boil). Whisk in crushed cookies and salt. Gradually add hot half-and-half mixture to egg mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup, pressing cookie crumbs through sieve.
5. Lightly spray sides of loaf pan with cooking spray. Pour custard onto caramel in prepared pan. Using a small spoon, skim any bubbles off surface of custard. (Alternatively, using a handheld kitchen torch, pop any bubbles on surface of custard.) Place loaf pan in a roasting pan or 13x9-inch baking pan; add hot water to larger pan to come 1 inch up sides of loaf pan. Loosely cover larger pan with foil.
6. Bake until edges are set, center wobbles slightly when pan is gently shaken, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 1 hour and 20 minutes to 1½ hours. Carefully transfer loaf pan to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Cover and refrigerate until cold and set, at least 2 hours, or up to overnight.
7. To serve, let cold custard stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Place a rimmed plate upside down on top of pan, and turn right side up. Spoon any remaining caramel in pan onto custard. Garnish with cookies, if desired. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Gorgeous Golden Caramel

1. In a small saucepan, bring ½ cup (100 grams) sugar and 3 tablespoons (45 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until mixture turns a deep amber color, about 5 minutes. Use a pastry brush dipped in water to dissolve any sugar that sticks to side of pan. Immediately pour caramel into a 9x5-inch nonstick metal loaf pan. Holding only top edges of pan, carefully swirl caramel in pan so bottom is evenly coated. (Bottom of pan will become hot; be sure to use a towel, pot holder, or trivet under pan to protect countertop.) When making the caramel, resisting the urge to stir the sugar as it melts is key to preventing crystallization, which is when the sugar sticks together in big clumps. Instead, swirl the pan and occasionally use a wet pastry brush to brush down the sides of the saucepan and dissolve any stuck-on sugar crystals. Swirling also helps distribute heat evenly, adjusting for any potential hot spots in the pan. Keep in mind that the darker the caramel, the more complex the bunet will taste. (Just be careful not to burn it!) It adds sharp acidity and toasty, smoky notes to the custard beyond just sweetness.

Time to Temper

1. In another small saucepan, heat half-and-half and almond extract over medium-low heat just until mixture begins to steam. (Do not boil). Whisk in crushed cookies and salt. Gradually add hot half-and-half mixture to egg mixture, whisking constantly until smooth. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup, pressing cookie crumbs through sieve. When it comes to custards, tempering involves slowly and carefully adding the hot liquid in a steady stream to the egg yolks while constantly whisking to gradually raise their temperature without scrambling the yolks. This dilutes the proteins in the yolks as they unravel and firm up, preventing them from clumping together tightly. This helps create a velvety base for the custard. Straining helps remove any bits of curdled egg from the custard so your final product is silky and smooth.

Bain-Marie and Bake

1. Lightly spray sides of loaf pan with cooking spray. Pour custard onto caramel in prepared pan. Using a small spoon, skim any bubbles off surface of custard. (Alternatively, using a handheld kitchen torch, pop any bubbles on surface of custard.) Place loaf pan in a roasting pan or 13x9-inch baking pan; add hot water to larger pan to come 1 inch up sides of loaf pan. Loosely cover larger pan with foil. Remove any bubbles you spot when pouring the custard mixture into the pan by skimming them off with a small spoon (or wave a kitchen torch back and forth over the bubbles to pop them) for a silky-smooth texture. A water bath, also known as a bain-marie, helps control and evenly distribute heat around the custard as it bakes. This encourages slow and steady coagulation of the eggs, which keeps the texture silky and smooth and helps prevent the custard from splitting.

2. Bake until edges are set, center wobbles slightly when pan is gently shaken, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 1 hour and 20 minutes to 1½ hours. Carefully transfer loaf pan to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Cover and refrigerate until cold and set, at least 2 hours, or up to overnight. You'll know the custard is ready to come out of the oven when you gently jostle the vessel you're baking the custard in and it appears set around the edges while the inside remains jiggly. Remember, the custard will continue to firm up when it chills in the refrigerator.

3. To serve, let cold custard stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Place a rimmed plate upside down on top of pan, and turn right side up. Spoon any remaining caramel in pan onto custard. Garnish with cookies, if desired. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. You don't want to risk breaking the beautiful and delicate bunet, so be gentle when inverting and let it gently slide out of the pan onto the rimmed plate, which will ensure you catch all the lovely amber-hued caramel.

CLASSIC FLAN

Makes 1 (8-inch) custard

In Latin America, Spain, and the Philippines, jolly wobbly flan is a holiday staple on Nochebuena, or Christmas Eve. Its silky-smooth and creamy texture is elevated with rich vanilla bean paste and amber-hued caramel. This custard is a renowned classic for a reason and adorns our tables year-round, but it holds a special place in our hearts around this time of year!

- **¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar**
- **⅓ cup (80 grams) water**
- **3 large eggs (150 grams)**
- **2 large egg yolks (37 grams)**
- **1 (14-ounce) can (396 grams) sweetened condensed milk**
- **1 (12-ounce) can (354 grams) evaporated milk**
- **1½ teaspoons (9 grams) vanilla bean paste**
- **¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt**

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).

2. In a small saucepan, bring sugar and ⅓ cup (80 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until mixture turns a deep amber color, 7 to 9 minutes. Use a pastry brush dipped in water to dissolve any sugar that sticks to side of pan. Immediately pour caramel into an 8-inch round nonstick metal cake pan. Holding only top edges of pan, carefully swirl caramel in pan so bottom is evenly coated. (Bottom of pan will become hot; be sure to use a towel, pot holder, or trivet under pan to protect countertop.) Place round pan in a roasting pan.

3. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and egg yolks until smooth. Whisk in condensed milk, evaporated milk, vanilla bean paste, and salt just until smooth and combined, being careful not to incorporate too much air. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup.

4. Lightly spray sides of cake pan with cooking spray. Pour custard onto caramel in prepared cake pan. Using a small spoon, skim any bubbles off surface of custard. (Alternatively, using a handheld kitchen torch, pop any bubbles on surface of custard.) Add hot water to roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of pan. Tightly cover roasting pan with foil.

5. Bake until edges are set, center wobbles slightly when pan is gently shaken, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Carefully transfer cake pan to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Cover and refrigerate until cold and set, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.

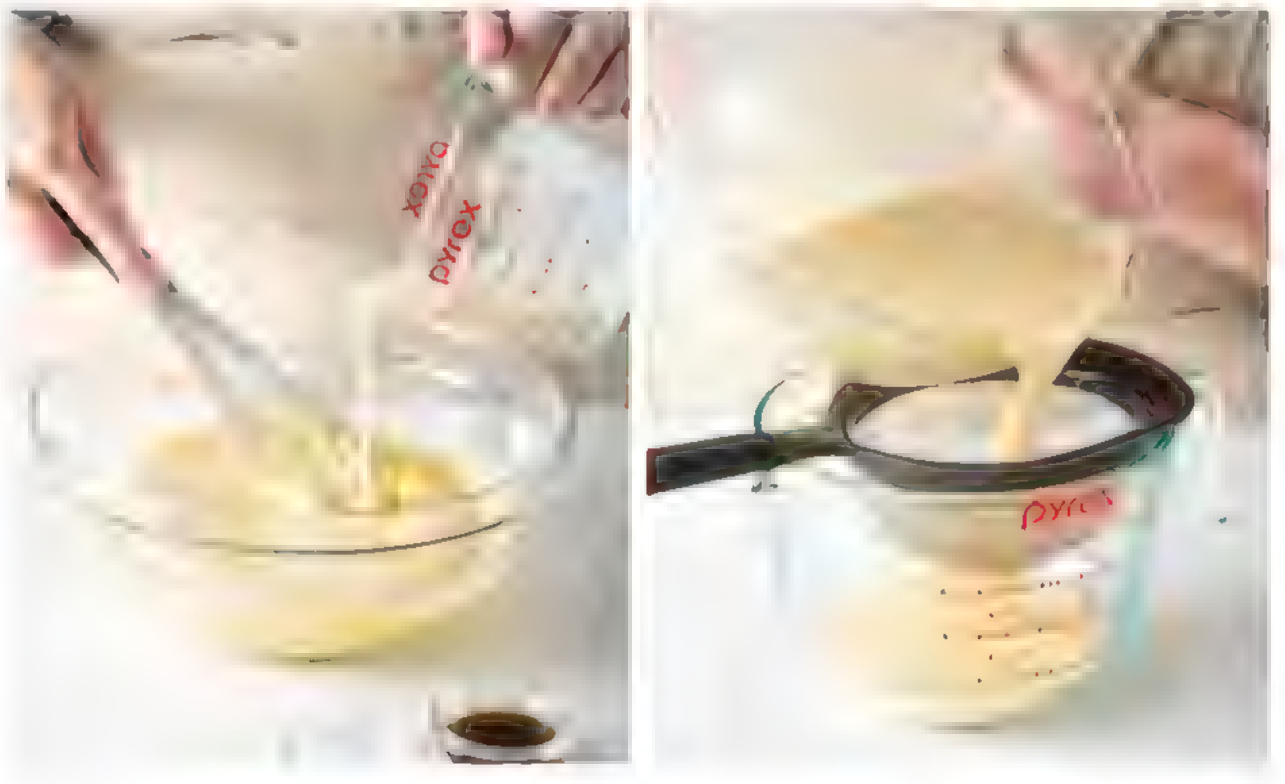
6. To serve, let cold custard stand at room temperature for 45 minutes. Place a rimmed plate upside down on top of pan, and turn right side up. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Gorgeous Golden Caramel

1. In a small saucepan, bring sugar and ⅓ cup (80 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until mixture turns a deep amber color, 7 to 9 minutes. Use a pastry brush dipped in water to dissolve any sugar that sticks to side of pan. Immediately pour caramel into an 8-inch round nonstick metal cake pan. Holding only top edges of pan, carefully swirl caramel in pan so bottom is evenly coated. (Bottom of pan will become hot; be sure to use a towel, pot holder, or trivet under pan to protect countertop.) Place round pan in a roasting pan. When making the caramel, resisting the urge to stir the sugar as it melts is key to preventing crystallization, which is when the sugar sticks together in big clumps. Instead, swirl the pan and occasionally use a wet pastry brush to brush down the sides of the saucepan and dissolve any stuck-on sugar crystals. Swirling also helps distribute heat evenly, adjusting for any potential hot spots in the pan. Keep in mind that the darker the caramel, the more complex the flan will taste. (Just be careful not to burn it!) It adds sharp acidity and toasty, smoky notes to the custard beyond just sweetness.

Creating the Custard

1. In a large bowl, whisk together eggs and egg yolks until smooth. Whisk in condensed milk, evaporated milk, vanilla bean paste, and salt just until smooth and combined, being careful not to incorporate too much air. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a liquid-measuring cup. Straining helps remove any bits of curdled egg from the custard so your final product is silky and smooth. Let the custard pass through the sieve by shaking it softly or stirring gently with a spoon to help move things along. Pressing the custard will force those curdled bits through the sieve, ruining the custard's satiny texture.



Bain-Marie and Bake

1. Lightly spray sides of cake pan with cooking spray. Pour custard onto caramel in prepared cake pan. Using a small spoon, skim any bubbles off surface of custard. (Alternatively, using a handheld kitchen torch, pop any bubbles on surface of custard.) Add hot water to roasting pan to come 1 inch up sides of round pan. Tightly cover roasting pan with foil. Remove any bubbles you spot when pouring the custard mixture into the pan by using a small spoon or a kitchen torch for a silky-smooth texture. A water bath, also known as a bain-marie, helps control and evenly distribute heat around the custard as it bakes. This encourages slow and steady coagulation of the eggs, which keeps the texture silky and smooth and helps prevent the custard from splitting.

2. Bake until edges are set, center wobbles slightly when pan is gently shaken, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 170°F (77°C) to 175°F (79°C), 1 hour to 1 hour and 10 minutes. Carefully transfer cake pan to a wire rack, and let cool completely. Cover and refrigerate until cold and set, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight. You'll know the custard is ready to come out of the oven when you gently jostle the vessel you're baking the custard in and it appears set around the edges while the inside remains jiggly. Remember, the custard will continue to firm up when it chills in the refrigerator.

Turn Out and Serve

1. To serve, let cold custard stand at room temperature for 45 minutes. Place a rimmed plate upside down on top of pan, and turn right side up. Best served same day. Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days. You don't want to risk breaking the delicious and delicate flan, so be gentle when inverting and allow it to gently slide out of the pan onto the rimmed plate, which will ensure you catch all the lovely amber-hued caramel.

Phyllis Hoffman DePiano, a.k.a. "Mama BFS," and Brian making biscuits with their family heirloom mixing bowl

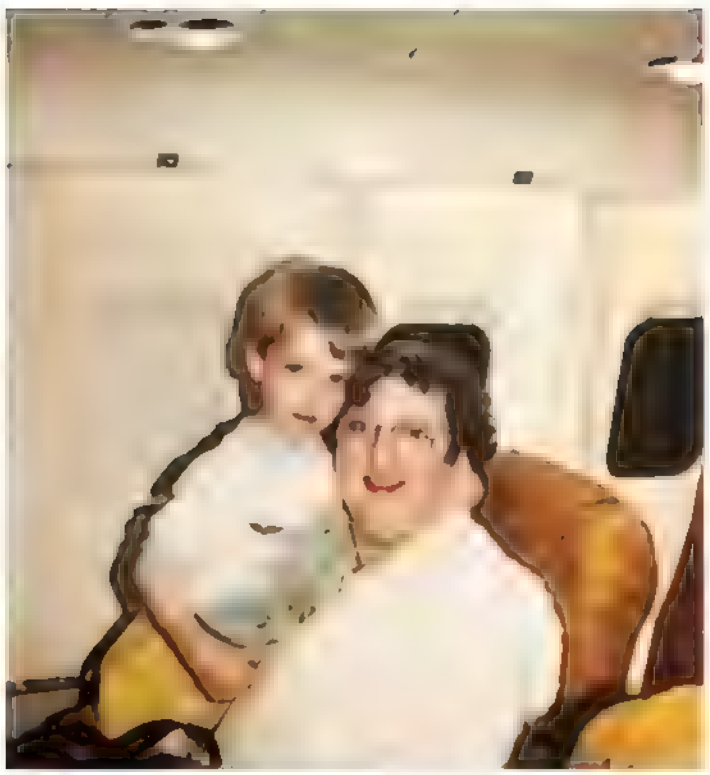
a tribute to MAMA BFS

BY BRIAN HART HOFFMAN

To all of you, she was "Mama BFS"—a name she gave herself—but to me and my twin brother, Eric, she was Mom. But more than Mom, she was also my hero, mentor, boss, and best friend. Phyllis Norton (Hoffman) DePiano's time with us came to an end on July 10, 2023, and my heart was forever changed. I move forward with a huge hole that can't be filled—but it's a reminder to celebrate her legacy and passions every day.

She wrote on her blog, *The Ribbon in My Journal*, that she didn't want to be remembered for her résumé and professional achievements. "It's not about accomplishments or wealth; it's about loving unconditionally, encouraging others, reaching out a hand to those in need, praying for and with friends who are hurting, and being an example of living our lives in such a way that our family and friends know we are always there for them."

But I want you to know some about her professional life so you can better understand the woman I am honoring. After becoming a certified public accountant in the 1970s and marrying my dad later that decade, she left the professional world to fulfill her biggest dream in life: becoming a mom. She prayed for twins, and in 1981, Eric and I got the best mom in the world. During this season of her life away from working, she learned how to cross-stitch from her neighbor and best friend, Barbara Cockerham. This added one more talent to her list that already included sewing and playing the piano and organ. Creative prowess led Mom, along with her sister, Janice, Barbara, and another friend, to start a magazine (with zero experience doing such) called *Just CrossStitch* in 1983. That magazine went on to be the largest needlework magazine in the world, and lots of accolades came with that impact. I will never forget our dad taking Eric and me to an industry trade show in



Phyllis and Brian during his first time on an airplane

Charlotte, North Carolina, to surprise Mom after she received a lifetime achievement award. I remember thinking, "Wow, our mom really is something special to so many. I'm so glad she is mine."

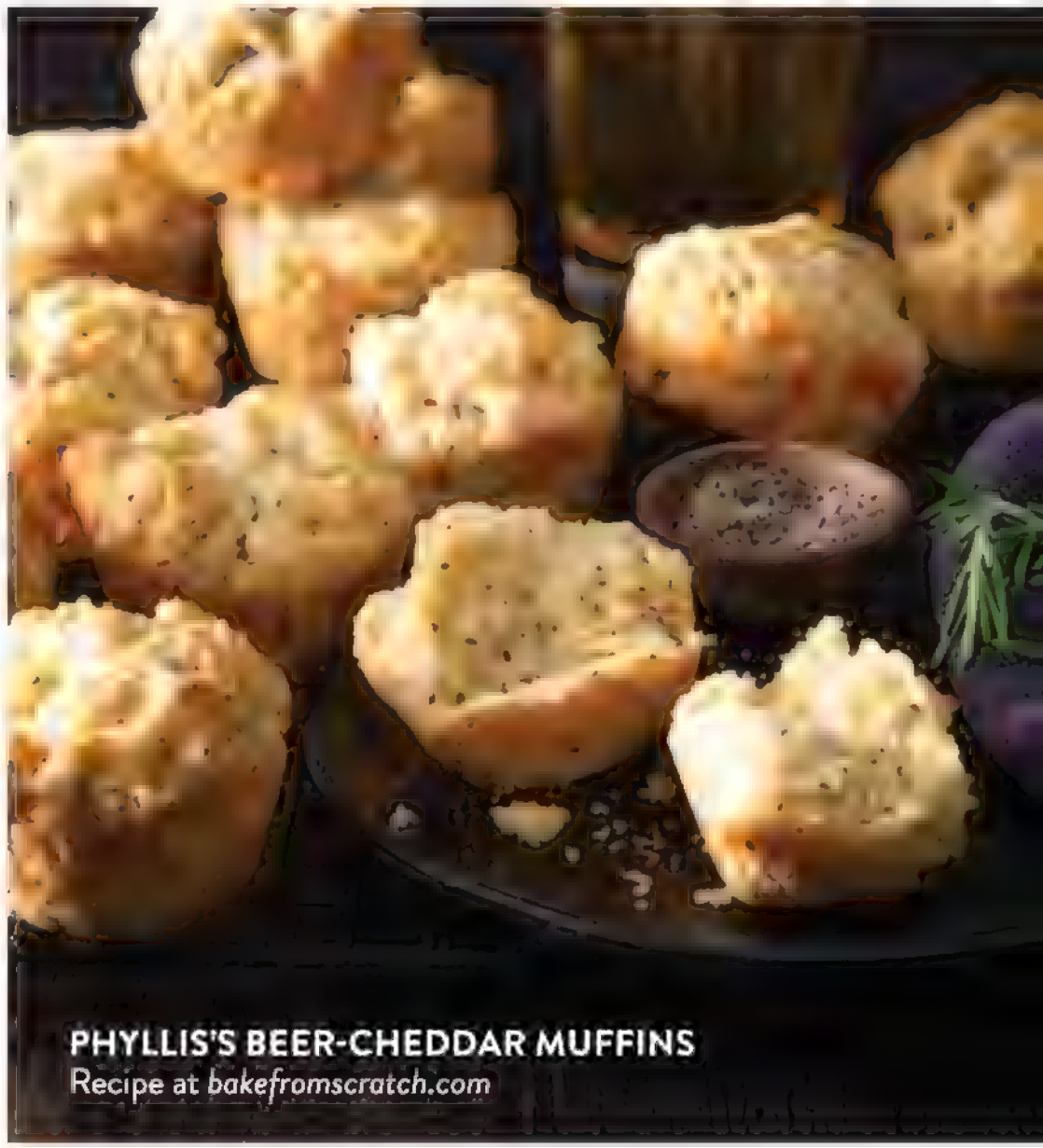
Over time, the business went through change and growth and was sold to a larger craft company in 1993 that took the brand—and Mom—to a bigger level. Under the company's ownership, she started *McCall's Quilting* and other brands that aligned with her talents and passions. In 1998, the company was ready for other moves and wanted to relocate the Birmingham, Alabama, operation to Golden, Colorado. But as I told you, being a mom was her dream in life, so she wasn't about to take professional advancement and move my brother and me across the country to a new school for our senior year of high school. She and my dad took a second mortgage out on their home so she could purchase the magazine brands she'd sold. That purchase reincorporated the business as Hoffman Media, and we stayed in Birmingham. I wish 17-year-old me knew the sacrifice and dedication that required, but that is the woman she was. She never looked back with regret.

In the years that followed, Mom expanded the company's offerings to include Southern lifestyle brands, with *Southern Lady*, *Taste of the South*, *Southern Home*, and *Cooking with Paula Deen*, as well as others dedicated to her passions, like *TeaTime*, *Classic Sewing*, and blogging at *The Ribbon in My Journal*.

I am a "mama's boy." I always have been, often asking her if I was her favorite. The answer was always, "No. I love both of my boys equally. You're both so different, so there is so much to love!" My reply was always something centered around telling her that she was my favorite mom . . . my only one but still so deserving of the praise.

Sixteen years ago, and six months apart, in 2007, Eric and I left our careers—him on Wall Street and me as a flight attendant—to join our mom in business. After going five years without a paycheck and working a second job to keep the company afloat and make sure her employees still received paychecks, the company experienced great growth. She needed help. Her first thought was to ask if we had interest in the company being generational or if she needed to look for other plans to grow and prepare the company to be sold at her retirement. Eric and I both took leaps of faith (here we go, following her example!) and gave up careers we loved only to discover careers we loved even more. And we got to do it alongside our mom.

For my first seven years at the company, I learned and worked in event management and brand management and eventually became the chief creative officer. Then my "Phyllis instinct" kicked in. I was a passionate home baker (you already knew that), and I thought, "Why isn't there a culinary magazine all about baking?" I couldn't wait to tell Mom about my idea and the well-thought-out plan that Brooke Bell and I scribbled in a notepad, only to hear that she wasn't so sure this was going to work. But being Mom and an entrepreneur, she agreed to test an issue of this new magazine. In the autumn of 2015, the first issue of *Bake from Scratch* hit the newsstands. That issue sold so well that our newsstand team instantly asked if a second issue was on the way. Mom was so proud.



PHYLLIS'S BEER-CHEDDAR MUFFINS
Recipe at *bakefromscratch.com*

Phyllis's husband Neal proudly carries on her pound cake tradition

Brian's twin brother, Eric, and their mother, Phyllis, at a Kentucky Derby party

JO'S WHIPPING CREAM POUND CAKE

Makes 1 (10-inch) cake

Recipe from Phyllis Hoffman DePiano

My recipe for my famous pound cake is actually not mine. It belonged to a sweet lady named Jo in our church, who was known as the Pound Cake Lady. Jo showed up with a hot pound cake at the most unexpected moments. She called it her pound cake ministry, and I thought that was the best. Her simple gesture always changed someone's day.

Jo's daughter, Darlene, and I grew up together, and Darlene graciously shared her mom's recipe with me. She told me that Jo made a pound cake every day for someone. She laid out her eggs and butter at night before she went to bed, and she was ready to go in the morning. I can't imagine how fabulous her kitchen must have smelled with its permanent pound cake fragrance!

This is one of the easiest cakes I have ever made, and it is always requested by my family. Not only is it wonderful to serve, but it makes me stop and think about the Pound Cake Lady, Ms. Jo.

We create memories for our families and friends with acts of kindness. I wish I could hug Ms. Jo and tell her how many lives she touched. She gave me a beautiful cut glass cake stand to use, and I think of her every time I use it. Bake a cake today . . . and share time with someone you love!

1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened
3 cups (600 grams) granulated sugar
5 large eggs (250 grams), room temperature
3 cups (375 grams) cake flour
1 cup (240 grams) heavy whipping cream, room temperature
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 325°F (170°C).
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium-high speed until light and fluffy, 4 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.
3. With mixer on low speed, add flour alternately with cream, beginning and ending with flour, beating just until combined after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
4. Spray a 10-inch tube pan with baking spray with flour. Spread batter into prepared pan.
5. Bake until a wooden pick inserted near center comes out clean, 1 hour and 10 minutes to 1 hour and 25 minutes, loosely covering with foil to prevent overbrowning, if needed. Let cool in pan on wire rack for 20 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely, top side up, on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *Do not use a tube pan with a removeable bottom; batter will leak out. You can also bake this in a 15-cup Bundt pan.*

The following year at the MIN (Magazine Industry News) Awards for the Hottest 30 Launches of the previous year, she was honored as the Publisher of the Year for the launch of *Classic Sewing*; Eric accepted an award for another new launch, *Southern Cast Iron*, that fires his passion for savory cooking; and *Bake from Scratch* won Hottest Launch of the Year. Talk about a full circle flashback moment for me when I joined Mom and my brother on stage to receive an award for our career achievements. Her lifetime achievement award from years back was way too soon because, in her lifetime, the achievements never stopped.

As our global baking community continued to grow, she coined herself "Mama BFS" in our office, Facebook group, and weekly Baking School with Williams Sonoma classes. She never claimed to be the baker, just a supportive and encouraging mom. I had the pleasure of taking recipes that she loved and revamping them into from-scratch recipes that graced the pages of the magazine, including her beer rolls (we call them Beer-Cheddar Muffins), her mom's (my Mimi) Black Bottom Pie, and most recently, the Lost and Found redo of the Pizitz Bakery Cherry-Pecan Cake that graced the table for her birthday each year as a child. She joined me in the kitchen for Baking School this year as we made that cake for our Mother's Day class, and I am so grateful it happened. Surprises and gift-giving were one of her love languages, and during the class, she presented me with an apron that she worked to design alongside Tracy Wood-Franklin, one of our amazing art directors at Hoffman Media, to commemorate one of my favorite teaching slogans for learning the folding technique, "12 o'clock, 6 o'clock, give a quarter turn."

Mom was also Gigi, proud grandmother to Eric's children, Hays and Amelia, and summer was a special time of the year. For Amelia, summer meant Camp Gigi, a week at Gigi's house, crafted just for her and her best friend, Olivia. Activities included sewing, art, setting the table, doing Gigi's hair and makeup, and, of course, baking with Uncle Buzz (me!). While not interested in learning to bake, Hays was a proud recipient of Gigi's Caramel Brownies any time he asked for them.

During the last few years, and especially during COVID-19 times, I made weekly baking drop-offs to Mom of the recipes I baked, some in testing, some from Baking School, and others just because they were her favorites. She loved fall flavors, and her face always lit up at the mention of anything apple or pear.

Baking also found its way into Mom's home with her husband Neal, the love of her life. In the last year, she enjoyed her favorite pound cake, Jo's Whipping Cream Pound Cake, with

Above: Brian, Phyllis, and Eric at the groundbreaking of The Hoffice on 2nd, the headquarters of Hoffman Media

Right: Phyllis surprised Brian during a Mother's Day class of Baking School with this apron featuring his signature folding phrase

CHERRY-PECAN CAKE
Recipe at *bakefromscratch.com*

regularity as Neal mastered baking it to ensure she was always surrounded by her favorite things. He also made biscuits, and I plan to bake banana bread with him soon, too! In her memory, we will bake these favorites together and know she is with us as we do.

My mom's successes weren't her goal, and they didn't define her. They allowed her to be a benevolent gift-giver to so many. Since her passing, we have learned of things she did (sometimes anonymously) to make other's lives better. That is how I want to live my life, too, ensuring that others succeed, feel love, and make it through tough times. Even if you don't have financial resources, it doesn't mean you can't make a difference. Baking is love, and presenting someone with something you made can change their day. May we all continue to honor her life and legacy by encouraging others, sharing in our successes, and being a beacon of love.

She always told me that I could do tough things, and writing this remembrance has been one of them, but it's an honor to share a sliver of what made Phyllis, my mom, such a spectacular person.

I can, in fact, do tough things. I love you, Mom, and I always will.

BLACK BOTTOM PIE
Recipe at *bakefromscratch.com*

Above: Phyllis and Brian making his grandmother Mimi's Black Bottom Pie during Baking School

Left: Phyllis and family celebrating the 2022 holidays in France. Left to right, Katie Hoffman, Eric's wife; Neal DePiano, Phyllis's husband; Hays and Amelia, Katie and Eric's children; Eric Hoffman; Phyllis; Brian Hart Hoffman; Stephen Hart Hoffman, Brian's husband

POPS OF Peppermint MEET Chocolate CHEER

CELEBRATION-WORTHY RECIPES
FILLED WITH AN ICONIC
HOLIDAY FLAVOR COMBINATION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER
AND STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD
AND KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY MARY BETH JONES

The Original
PEPPERMINT
BARK
THE ORIGINAL
PEPPERMINT BARK
LE CLASSIQUE
MENTHE POIVRÉE
ORIGINALE
NET WT / POIDS NET 454 g (1 LB

Peppermint-Cream Cheese Swirl Brownies, page 68

Chocolate-Peppermint
Bark Cookies
page 67

cover recipe

Chocolate-Peppermint
Cake Roll, page 68

A Modern Holiday Tradition

Beloved by millions and especially popular during the holidays, peppermint bark can be found in a variety of flavor combinations and from many sources. But our favorite at *Bake from Scratch* is from Williams Sonoma. This year marks the 25th anniversary of Williams Sonoma Peppermint Bark, so we're breaking off a few facts about this creamy-crunchy delight.

- Williams Sonoma debuted its Original Peppermint Bark in 1998 after a team of food merchants set out to create throwback treats that would remind founder Chuck Williams of his childhood during Christmastime. Testing took 20 rounds to make perfect!
- Peppermint bark is essentially tempered chocolate topped with crushed hard peppermint candies and left to solidify before breaking into pieces. The finished product resembles the craggy surface of tree bark, hence the name. It's believed that peppermint bark was inspired by the French confection *mendiant*, a small chocolate disk topped with nuts and dried fruit.
- Williams Sonoma makes peppermint bark with Guittard chocolate (a recipe Guittard makes specifically for Williams Sonoma), triple-distilled peppermint oil, and no artificial flavors or colors. More than 1 million pounds of Guittard chocolate and 65,000 peppermint pieces are used each holiday season.
- Williams Sonoma's peppermint bark is available for only 12 weeks a year, during the late fall and early winter months, making it a short-lived but beloved seasonal product. Williams Sonoma currently has 18 products featuring peppermint bark.
- December 1 is National Peppermint Bark Day in the United States. Williams Sonoma celebrates by hosting their annual Peppermint Bark-Off, in which bakers create custom confections using peppermint bark.

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT BARK COOKIES

Makes about 24 cookies

These candy-filled cookies are sure to put you on Santa's nice list! The crispy edges give way to a chewy center studded with peppermint bark pieces and pockets of melted chocolate.

- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (165 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract
- 2¾ cups (344 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ¾ teaspoon (3.75 grams) baking soda
- 1 cup (170 grams) finely chopped peppermint bark
- 1 cup (170 grams) chopped semisweet chocolate
- Garnish: coarsely chopped peppermint bark, flaked sea salt

1. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugars at medium speed until fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, kosher salt, and baking soda. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture, beating until just combined. Fold in finely chopped bark and chocolate. Using a 3-tablespoon spring-loaded scoop, scoop dough (about 60 grams each), and place on prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
5. Place cold dough 2 inches apart on prepared pans.
6. Bake until golden brown, 10 to 12 minutes, rotating pans halfway through baking. Immediately garnish with coarsely chopped bark and sea salt, if desired. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days.

PEPPERMINT-CREAM CHEESE SWIRL BROWNIES

Makes 12 brownies

Take a bite of holiday cheer with these decadent brownies made with rich black cocoa and dark chocolate. Swirled with cream cheese boosted with bold peppermint, this fudgy treat gives us all the festive feels.

Swirl:

- 2 (8-ounce) packages (454 grams) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon (8 grams) all-purpose flour
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) peppermint extract
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

Batter:

- 2⅓ cups (396 grams) chopped dark chocolate
- 1 cup (227 grams) unsalted butter, cubed
- 1½ cups (300 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 cup (220 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup (64 grams) black cocoa powder
- 2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
- 5 large eggs (250 grams), room temperature
- 2 teaspoons (8 grams) vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with cooking spray. Line pan with parchment paper, letting excess extend over sides of pan.
2. For swirl: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat cream cheese at medium speed until smooth. Add granulated sugar and flour; beat until well combined, stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating just until combined after each addition and stopping to scrape sides of bowl; beat in extracts. Cover and refrigerate.
3. For batter: In the top of a double boiler, combine chocolate and butter. Cook over simmering water, whisking frequently, until melted and smooth. Remove from heat; whisk in sugars until smooth.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, and salt.
5. Add eggs, one at a time, to chocolate mixture, whisking until combined after each addition; whisk in vanilla. Fold in flour mixture until just combined. Spread two-thirds of batter (about 4⅓ cups or 1,097 grams) into prepared pan.
6. Using an offset spatula, gently spread swirl mixture onto batter in pan. Dollop remaining batter onto swirl mixture. Using a wooden skewer or knife, gently swirl layers together.
7. Bake until edges are set and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 55 minutes to 1 hour, covering with foil during final 30 minutes of baking to prevent excess browning. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or up to overnight.
8. Using excess parchment as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT CAKE ROLL

Makes 1 (14-inch) cake roll

Make the most wonderful time of the year extra special with this decadent, seasonal roll. Brimming with a silky peppermint filling encased in a tender chocolate cake, this dessert is sure to satisfy your holiday sweet tooth!

- 3 large eggs (150 grams)
- ⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ cup (63 grams) all-purpose flour
- ¼ cup (21 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted, plus more for dusting
- ½ teaspoon (2.5 grams) baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

Peppermint Cream Filling (recipe follows)

- ⅓ cup (52 grams) finely chopped peppermint bark*

Garnish: peppermint bark shards

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray a 14½x9½-inch rimmed baking sheet with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pan with parchment paper; spray parchment.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat eggs at medium-high speed until foamy. Gradually add sugar, beating until mixture is thick, pale yellow, and doubled in size, about 5 minutes. Beat in vanilla.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt. Using a balloon whisk, gently fold flour mixture into egg mixture. Spread batter into prepared pan.
4. Bake until cake springs back when lightly pressed in center, 9 to 11 minutes. (Do not overbake.)
5. Meanwhile, sift cocoa into a 15x10-inch rectangle onto a clean kitchen towel.
6. Immediately run a thin knife or a small offset spatula around edges of cake to loosen. Invert cake onto cocoa on towel; gently peel off parchment. Sift cocoa onto cake. Starting at one short side, gently roll up cake and towel together, and place, seam side down, on a wire rack. Let cool completely.
7. Carefully unroll cooled cake. Transfer 1 cup (170 grams) Peppermint Cream Filling to a pastry bag fitted with a large petal piping tip (Wilton No. 125); spread remaining filling onto cake, leaving a ½-inch border on one short side. Sprinkle chopped bark onto filling. Gently reroll cake and filling without towel. Carefully transfer cake to a baking sheet, and refrigerate until set, about 20 minutes, or until ready to serve.
8. Just before serving, trim edges of cake roll, if desired. Pipe reserved filling on top of cake roll; garnish with peppermint bark, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used Williams Sonoma Original Peppermint Bark.*

Peppermint Cream Filling

Makes about 2¼ cups

- 5 ounces (140 grams) cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup (30 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1½ cups (360 grams) cold heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon (5 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- ¾ teaspoon (3 grams) peppermint extract

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat cream cheese and confectioners' sugar at medium speed until smooth and creamy, stopping to scrape sides of bowl.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together cold cream, cocoa, and peppermint extract until smooth. With mixer on medium speed, slowly add cream mixture to cream cheese mixture, beating until combined and stopping scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until medium-stiff peaks form, 2 to 3 minutes. Use immediately.

CHOCOLATE-PEPPERMINT LAYER CAKE WITH CARAMELIZED WHITE CHOCOLATE BUTTERCREAM

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

Make the holidays merry and bright with this stunning three-layer cake. Tender-crumbed chocolate-peppermint cake layers get sandwiched with a buttercream made with toasted white chocolate, which adds a deep nutty flavor. Gorgeously decorated to mimic a candy cane, this cake is the ultimate centerpiece for any holiday celebration.

- ¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup (85 grams) Dutch process cocoa powder
- 1⅔ cups (365 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar*
- 1½ cups (360 grams) hot brewed coffee
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 cup (240 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature
- 3 large eggs (150 grams), room temperature and lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) peppermint extract
- 1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
- 2¼ cups (281 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon (3.75 grams) baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon (2.25 grams) kosher salt
- Caramelized White Chocolate Buttercream (recipe follows)
- Red gel food coloring, for decoration
- Garnish: peppermint candies

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Spray 3 (8-inch) round cake pans with baking spray with flour. Line bottom of pans with parchment paper.
2. In a large heavy-bottomed saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Whisk in cocoa; cook, whisking frequently, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat; whisk in brown sugar, hot coffee, and granulated sugar until sugars dissolve. Whisk in buttermilk, eggs, and extracts.
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Gradually add flour mixture to cocoa mixture, whisking until just combined. Divide batter among prepared pans (about 621 grams each).
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool completely in pans on wire racks. Remove from pans, and level cooled cake layers, if desired.
5. Place 1 cake layer on a serving platter. Spread 1½ cups (275 grams) Caramelized White Chocolate Buttercream on top. Top with second cake layer, and spread 1½ cups (275 grams) buttercream on top. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread remaining buttercream on top and sides of cake, smoothing with an offest spatula or bench scraper.
6. To decorate with red food coloring, using a wooden pick, drag food coloring in long lines along sides of cake, if desired (**A**). Using a bench scraper or long offset spatula, spread food coloring into buttercream in long, smooth motions to create streaks (**B**). (The more passes you make with bench scraper or spatula, the more the red color will spread, so make as few passes as possible.) Garnish with candies just before serving, if desired. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

**We used C&H® Light Brown Sugar.*

Caramelized White Chocolate Buttercream

Makes about 7 cups

- 8 ounces (226 grams) white chocolate, chopped
- 2¼ cups (450 grams) granulated sugar
- 10 large egg whites (300 grams), room temperature
- ¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
- 2½ cups (567 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt

1. Preheat oven to 250°F (130°C).
2. In a completely dry 9-inch round cake pan, place white chocolate.
3. Bake until melted and a light caramel color, about 45 minutes, stirring with a spatula every 10 minutes. (Chocolate might look dry and crumbly at any point but continue stirring until smooth.)
4. In the heatproof bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together sugar, egg whites, and cream of tartar. Place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Cook, stirring frequently, until sugar dissolves and an instant-read thermometer registers 160°F (71°C).
5. Carefully return bowl to stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, beat at high speed until mixture has cooled significantly and becomes thick and glossy. Reduce mixer speed to medium-high; add butter, 2 tablespoons (28 grams) at a time, beating until completely combined after each addition. Beat until buttercream is thick and glossy. (It may look slightly curdled at some point, but keep mixing.) Beat in vanilla and salt.
6. If white chocolate has solidified, transfer to a microwave-safe container, and heat on high in 30-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted. With mixer on medium speed, slowly add white chocolate to buttercream, beating until combined and stopping to scrape bottom and sides of bowl. Use immediately.

RISE *and* SHINE

DON'T LET A BUSY SCHEDULE STOP YOU FROM MAKING DELICIOUS DOUGHS! WITH THESE OVERNIGHT RECIPES, YOUR BREAD IS MEANT TO WORK WHILE YOU REST, ALLOWING FOR MORE NUANCED FLAVORS IN EVERY BITE.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA AND AMANDA STABILE
FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD / STYLING BY MAGGIE HILL

Spinach-Artichoke Rolls
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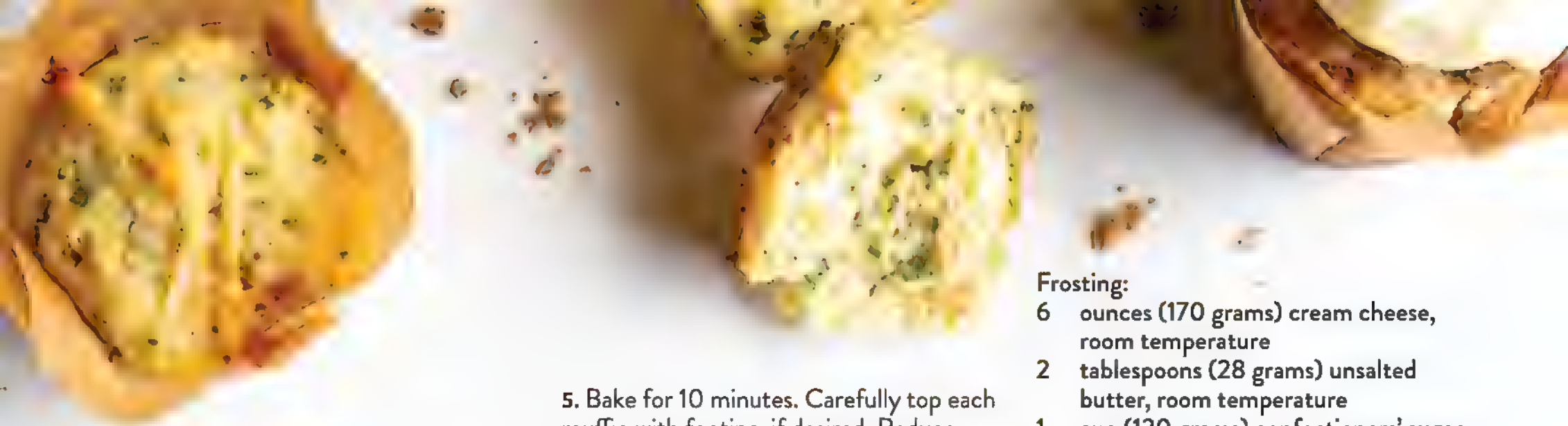

SAVORY HERB-AND-CHEESE MUFFINS

Makes 12 muffins

Overnight breads don't have to be baked for just breakfast! This delicious muffin batter can be prepped in the morning and baked fresh and hot for family supper that night.

- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup (100 grams) cornmeal
- 4 teaspoons (20 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground black pepper
- ⅔ cup (149 grams) vegetable oil
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- 1¼ cups (300 grams) whole buttermilk
- ⅔ cup (85 grams) shredded fontina cheese*
- ⅔ cup (48 grams) freshly grated Parmesan cheese*
- ⅓ cup (13 grams) finely chopped fresh chives
- ⅓ cup (13 grams) finely chopped fresh parsley

Garnish: shredded fontina cheese

1. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, cornmeal, baking powder, salt, and pepper.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together oil and eggs until smooth; whisk in buttermilk. Gradually add flour mixture, stirring until just combined and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or up to overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line alternating cups of 2 (12-cup) muffin pans with parchment paper liners or spray with baking spray with flour.
4. Let batter stand at room temperature for 5 minutes. Fold in cheeses, chives, and parsley. Divide batter among prepared muffins cups (about 5 tablespoons or 90 grams each). Fill empty muffin cups two-thirds full with water.
5. Bake for 10 minutes. Carefully top each muffin with fontina, if desired. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F (190°C), and bake until golden and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, about 8 minutes more. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool on a wire rack. Serve warm, or let cool completely.

**We used BelGioioso® Fontina Cheese and Parmesan Cheese.*

OVERNIGHT CINNAMON ROLL MUFFINS

Makes 12 muffins

Get the classic flavors of a warm, freshly baked cinnamon roll with the convenience of muffins in this delectable hybrid. Filled with an inviting blend of cinnamon and nutmeg that radiates through each tender bite, these muffins are only made better with a creamy dollop of frosting on top.

Batter:

- 2½ cups (313 grams) all-purpose flour
- 3½ teaspoons (17.5 grams) baking powder
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- ¾ cup (180 grams) whole milk, room temperature
- ¼ cup (60 grams) sour cream, room temperature
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

Streusel:

- ½ cup (63 grams) all-purpose flour
- ½ cup (110 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon (6 grams) ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon (1 gram) ground nutmeg
- 4 tablespoons (56 grams) unsalted butter, melted and cooled slightly

Frosting:

- 6 ounces (170 grams) cream cheese, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons (28 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract

1. For batter: In a medium bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together granulated sugar and melted butter. Whisk in eggs. Add milk, sour cream, and vanilla; whisk until smooth and combined. Gradually add flour mixture, whisking until almost combined. Using a small spatula, scrape sides of bowl; fold until just combined and no dry streaks remain. (There may be small lumps, but do not overmix the batter.) Cover and refrigerate for 8 hours or up to overnight.
3. For streusel: In a small bowl, whisk together flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, and nutmeg. Stir in melted butter until combined and mixture is crumbly. Cover and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes or until ready to use.
4. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line alternating cups of 2 (12-cup) muffin pans with parchment paper liners or spray with baking spray with flour.
5. Let batter stand at room temperature for 5 minutes. Reserve ¼ cup (30 grams) streusel. Carefully fold remaining streusel into batter until just combined. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups (about 5 tablespoons or 95 grams each). Top each muffin with 1 teaspoon (4 grams) reserved streusel. Fill empty muffin cups two-thirds full with water.
6. Bake for 10 minutes. Reduce oven temperature to 375°F (190°C), and bake until golden and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out with a few moist crumbs, 10 to 12 minutes more. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
7. For frosting: In another medium bowl, fold together cream cheese and butter until smooth and combined. Stir in confectioners' sugar and vanilla until smooth. Spread frosting on top of cooled muffins, and serve immediately.

PRO TIP
Leaving every other cup of the muffin pan empty allows for maximum rise and doming to your muffins; adding water to the empty cups helps the pan heat evenly.

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Cheese Muffins
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Five-Spice Cranberry-
Pecan Rolls
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SPINACH-ARTICHOKE ROLLS

Makes 12 rolls

Better than the beloved dip at many restaurants, this upgrade on classic rolls is packed with gooey cheeses, hearty vegetables, and delicious spices in each unforgettable swirl.

- ¾ cup (169 grams) cream cheese, softened
- ¼ cup (60 grams) plus 3 tablespoons (45 grams) heavy whipping cream, divided
- 3 tablespoons (42 grams) mayonnaise
- 2 cups (225 grams) shredded smoked Gouda cheese, divided
- ½ cup (36 grams) freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) onion powder
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon paprika
- ¼ teaspoon ground red powder
- ⅛ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 cup (81 grams) loosely packed chopped drained thawed frozen spinach
- 1 cup (160 grams) chopped drained marinated artichoke hearts
- Do-It-All Dough (recipe on page 42)
- All-purpose flour, for dusting

1. Spray a 13x9-inch rimmed baking sheet with baking spray with flour.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together cream cheese, 3 tablespoons (45 grams) cream, and mayonnaise until thoroughly combined, about 2 minutes. Using a rubber spatula, stir in 1½ cups (169 grams) Gouda and Parmesan. Stir in salt, onion powder, garlic powder, paprika, red pepper, nutmeg, and black pepper until thoroughly combined.
3. Using a cheesecloth, wring out excess moisture from spinach. Add spinach and artichoke to cheese mixture, and fold until thoroughly combined.
4. Lightly punch down Do-It-All Dough. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes.
5. Lightly dust work surface with flour. Turn out dough onto prepared surface, and roll into an 18x12-inch rectangle. Using a small offset spatula, spread spinach mixture onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side. Starting with long side opposite border, roll up dough into a log; pinch seam to seal. Gently shape log to 18 inches long and even thickness, if necessary. Using a serrated knife dipped in flour or unscented

dental floss, cut log into 12 slices (about 1½ inches thick). Place slices, cut side down, in prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
6. Let cold rolls rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 to 2 hours.
7. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
8. Pour remaining ¼ cup (60 grams) cream onto rolls.
9. Bake until tops are golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 40 to 45 minutes. Increase oven temperature to high broil. Top rolls with remaining ½ cup (56 grams) Gouda, and broil until cheese is melted and golden brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Serve immediately.

FIVE-SPICE CRANBERRY-PECAN ROLLS

Makes 12 rolls

Wouldn't you love to wake up to a fresh pan of sweet rolls on a chilly day? For this take on morning buns, an aromatic filling made with five-spice powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg is spread on perfectly soft dough and baked until gorgeously golden.

⅓ cup (76 grams) unsalted butter, softened
⅔ cup (147 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar
1 tablespoon (8 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
1½ teaspoons (4.5 grams) orange zest, divided
1⅛ teaspoons (2 grams) Chinese five-spice powder, divided
1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
Do-It-All Dough (recipe on page 42)
¾ cup (85 grams) toasted pecans*, roughly chopped
½ cup (68 grams) fresh or thawed frozen cranberries, roughly chopped
½ cup (120 grams) heavy whipping cream, divided
1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
Garnish: toasted chopped pecans

1. Spray a 13x9-inch baking pan with baking spray with flour.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and brown sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 5 to 6 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add flour, 1 teaspoon (3 grams) orange zest, 1 teaspoon (2 grams) five-spice powder, cinnamon, and nutmeg, and beat until combined, about 1 minute.
3. Lightly punch down Do-It-All Dough. Cover and let stand for 10 minutes.
4. Lightly dust work surface with flour. Turn out dough onto prepared surface, and roll into an 18x12-inch rectangle. Using a small offset spatula, spread butter mixture onto dough, leaving a ½-inch border on one long side. Sprinkle pecans and cranberries over butter mixture. Starting with long side opposite border, roll up dough into a log; pinch seam to seal. Gently shape log to 18 inches long and even thickness, if necessary. Using a serrated knife dipped in flour or unscented dental floss, cut log into 12 slices (about 1½ inches thick). Place slices, cut side down, in prepared pan. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
5. Let cold rolls rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, 1 to 2 hours.
6. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
7. Pour ¼ cup (60 grams) cream onto rolls.
8. Bake until lightly golden and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 25 to 30 minutes, loosely covering with foil to prevent excess browning, if necessary. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes.
9. In a small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar, remaining ¼ cup (60 grams) cream, remaining ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) orange zest, and remaining ⅛ teaspoon five-spice powder until smooth. Drizzle onto warm rolls, and garnish with pecans, if desired. Serve immediately.

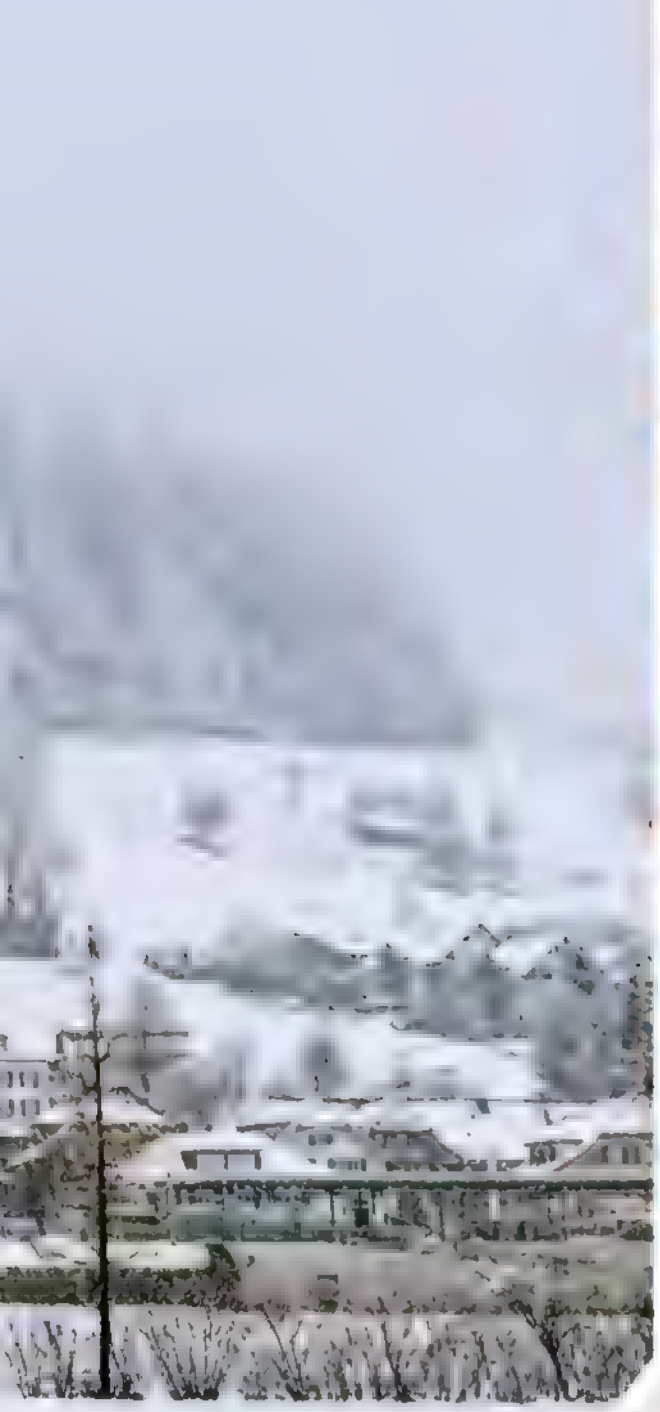
**We used Schermer Pecans.*

a SWEET Swiss Christmas

KNOWN FOR ITS GRAND SNOW-COVERED MOUNTAINS, ALPINE VILLAGES, AND MAJESTIC LAKES, SWITZERLAND IS ALL AGLOW DURING THE HOLIDAYS. CHRISTMAS MARKETS ARE BOUNTIFUL AND BRIMMING WITH CHOCOLATIERS, STEAMING FONDUE POTS, MELTY RACLETTE, AND MUGS OF GLÜHWEIN (MULLED WINE). AND IN BAKERIES AND HOME KITCHENS, YOU'LL FIND SEASONAL COOKIES AND BREADS BAKED WITH GENERATIONS-OLD RECIPES.

BY BROOKE BELL / PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOANN PAI

Männlichen



Switzerland Baking Retreat

Be the first to get information on our Switzerland Baking Retreat **December 6–11, 2024**. *To be placed on an interest list, email events@bakefromscratch.com.*

Andie
is the author of
three cookbooks:
Helvetic Kitchen,
Drink Like the Swiss,
and **Swiss Cookies.**

Connect with her
on Instagram
(@helvetickitchen),
on Facebook, and
through her website,
helvetickitchen.com.

Swiss Christmas Cookies

FOR COOKBOOK AUTHOR ANDIE PILOT, BAKING CHRISTMAS COOKIES FOR BEAUTIFUL COOKIE PLATES IS A SWISS FAMILY TRADITION SHE'S PROUD TO CARRY ON

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD STYLING BY ANDIE PILOT

In the Emmental, a region in central Switzerland famous for its cheese, butter from local dairies is still pressed into wooden molds before it's sold. The designs vary, but Swiss imagery such as cows, Swiss crosses, and edelweiss are heavily featured. Today this practice is primarily decorative, but historically the butter molds would indicate not only the amount of butter, but also the dairy that produced it.

The day we visited cookbook author Andie Pilot at her cozy home in the Emmental near the Swiss Alps, we twisted through snowy village roads lined with fir tree branches hanging low with freshly fallen snow. When we pulled up to her house perched on the side of a hill overlooking a meadow and local train line, we found Andie outside shoveling snow from her driveway. We became fast friends as we warmed our hands with coffee inside Andie's kitchen and admired the paper chains and handmade Christmas decorations crafted by her daughter.

While Andie grew up in Canada near Calgary, she spent summers visiting her grandparents in Switzerland. In 2010, Andie moved to Switzerland and fully embraced the tradition of baking cookies at Christmas. Andie is lucky to live next door to her Swiss mother, who's known for her extensive cookie-baking, with a "light" year of baking being about a dozen different types of cookies. During the holidays, when guests come to visit, cookie plates are set out for everyone to enjoy alongside coffee, kirsch, or schnapps. These cookie plates feature multiple types of cookies, from small *Mailänderli* cut into a variety of shapes, like bells and stars, to *Orangenschnittli*, which are fabulous bars made with a shortbread crust and orange-almond filling. In a country where holiday baking is taken very seriously, the ultimate Christmas gift for Andie is her mom's approval of her cookies.

ORANGENSCHNITTLI

Makes about 24 bars

These bars have a lovely shortbread crust with an orange and almond filling.

Dough:

- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (124 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 teaspoons (10 grams) baking powder
- ¾ cup plus 2 tablespoons (198 grams) cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
- 1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste

Filling:

- 1½ cups plus 1 tablespoon (150 grams) almond flour
- ¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon (3 grams) orange zest
- ½ cup (120 grams) fresh orange juice
- 3 tablespoons (60 grams) orange marmalade

Glaze:

- ⅔ cup (80 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 2 tablespoons (30 grams) fresh orange juice

1. For dough: In a large bowl, whisk together all-purpose flour, granulated sugar, and baking powder. Add cold butter. Using your fingers, rub butter into flour mixture until mixture looks sandy.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and vanilla bean paste. Using a wooden spoon, stir egg mixture into flour mixture until dough comes together. Divide dough in half (about 379 grams each), and shape each into a rectangle. Wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour.
3. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
4. For filling: In another large bowl, whisk together almond flour, granulated sugar, and orange zest and juice until well combined.
5. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough into a 13x10-inch rectangle. Place on prepared pan. Spread marmalade onto dough; spread almond flour mixture onto marmalade.
6. On a lightly floured surface, roll remaining dough into a 13x10-inch rectangle; place on filling.
7. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool on pan on a wire rack for 10 minutes.
8. For glaze: In another small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar and orange juice until smooth. Pour onto warm bar, spreading with an offset spatula. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack.
9. Trim edges of bar, if desired. Cut into 2-inch bars. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

MAILÄNDERLI

Makes about 22 cookies

These are the standard Swiss Christmas cookies made by nearly every bakery and every family in the country. Buttery, with a hint of lemon, the taste is a nostalgic reminder of childhood and Christmas for Swiss people throughout the world.

Dough:

- ½ cup plus 1 tablespoon (127 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons (124 grams) granulated sugar
- 3 large egg yolks (56 grams), room temperature
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) lemon zest
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour, sifted

Glaze:

- 1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature
- ⅛ teaspoon granulated sugar

1. For dough: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg yolks, one at a time, beating until well combined after each addition. Beat in lemon zest and salt until combined. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour, beating until just combined. (See Note.) Divide dough in half, and shape each half into a disk. Wrap each in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, or up to overnight.

2. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

3. On a lightly floured surface, roll half of dough to ¼-inch thickness. Using a 2¾-inch holiday shaped cutter, cut dough, rerolling and cutting scraps to use all dough, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough. Freeze for 15 minutes.

4. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).

5. For glaze: In a small bowl, whisk together egg yolk and sugar; brush onto cold dough.

6. Bake until glaze is set and bottoms are golden brown, 12 to 17 minutes. Let cool completely on pans on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 5 days.

Note: *If dough looks dry once you have mixed in the flour, add a little more egg yolk or milk to bring together if needed.*

BASLER BRUNSLI

Makes about 60 cookies

These chocolaty cookies are forever associated with the city of Basel and were initially baked there not only at Christmas but also for weddings and other special occasions. There is debate over which nuts to use, whether almonds, hazelnuts, or even walnuts. Some recipes call for grated or melted chocolate, while others depend on cocoa, and some, like this one, use both. Finally, some recipes suggest the cookies should be baked low in the oven, and some forgo baking completely and just leave them out to dry.

- **2 cups plus 4 teaspoons (200 grams) hazelnut flour**
- **1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar, plus more for sprinkling**
- **1 (3.5-ounce) bar (100 grams) dark chocolate, grated**
- **1 cup (85 grams) unsweetened cocoa powder**
- **2 teaspoons (4 grams) ground cinnamon**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **3 large egg whites (120 grams), room temperature**
- **2 teaspoons (10 grams) kirsch***

1. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, grated chocolate, cocoa, cinnamon, and salt.
2. In the bowl of stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form. Gently fold flour mixture and kirsch into egg whites until a dough forms. Divide dough in half, and wrap each in plastic wrap. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, or up to overnight. (If refrigerating overnight, let dough stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before rolling out.)
3. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Lightly sprinkle work surface with sugar; turn out half of dough onto prepared surface. Roll dough to ¼-inch thickness. Using a 2¼-inch star cutter, cut dough, rerolling and cutting scraps to use all dough, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans. Repeat procedure with remaining dough.
5. Bake until fragrant and tops look dry, 6 to 8 minutes. Let cool on pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

**Kirsch is a clear cherry brandy. Do not substitute cherry liqueur; the products are not interchangeable.*

TOTENBEINLI

Makes 48 cookies

Totenbeinli, *meaning "bones of the dead" (though more literally translated as "legs of the dead"), are crunchy, nut-filled cookies originating in Graubünden. This macabre name comes from the fact that they were once commonly served at wakes and should be about as hard and crunchy as the aforementioned bones.*

- ⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons (104 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1 cup (200 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature
- ½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
- 1½ cups (188 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon (5 grams) baking powder
- 1 teaspoon (2 grams) ground cinnamon
- 1¼ cups (120 grams) almond flour
- ¾ cup (106 grams) toasted whole almonds
- ½ cup (57 grams) chopped toasted almonds

1. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium-high speed until pale and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add eggs, one at a time, beating until well combined after each addition. Beat in salt until combined.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together all-purpose flour, baking powder, and cinnamon. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, and beat at low speed until just combined. Fold in almond flour and all almonds.
4. Turn out dough onto prepared pan, and shape into a flat 13x10-inch rectangle. Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, or freeze for about 15 minutes.
5. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
6. Bake until dough is set and lightly browned, 15 to 25 minutes. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack. Leave oven on.
7. Trim edges, if desired. Cut rectangle in 48 (5x½-inch) sticks. Place, cut side up, on pan.
8. Bake until edges are golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks. Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

SCHOGGI TROPFEN

Makes 52 cookies

These chocolate drops are made exclusively with spelt flour, which makes the finished product impossibly tender. To decorate, Andie dips them in chocolate and garnishes with sparkly candied peel.

⅔ cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, room temperature
¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract
2 cups plus 1 tablespoon (248 grams) spelt flour, sifted, plus more for dusting
⅓ cup plus 1 tablespoon (30 grams)unsweetened cocoa powder
6 ounces (150 grams) dark chocolate, chopped
Chopped crystallized orange peel, for sprinkling

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and sugar at medium speed until pale and fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, and beat until well combined. Beat in salt and vanilla until combined.
2. In a medium bowl, whisk together flour and cocoa. Add flour mixture to butter mixture, and beat at low speed until just combined. Turn out dough, and shape into a disk. Wrap in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour, or up to overnight.
3. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.
4. Lightly dust work surface with flour. On prepared surface, roll dough to about ¼-inch thickness. Using a 2-inch teardrop cutter, cut dough, rerolling and cutting scraps to use all dough, and place 2 inches apart on prepared pans.
5. Bake until fragrant and tops look dry, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool on pans on wire racks for 10 minutes. Remove from pans, and let cool completely on wire racks.
6. In a medium microwave-safe bowl, heat chocolate on high in 15-second intervals, stirring between each, until melted and smooth. Dip one end of cookies into chocolate as desired, letting excess drip off. Place cookies on a sheet of parchment paper, and sprinkle with orange peel. Let stand until chocolate is set, about 30 minutes. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Tuiles Bäckerei Wegmüller

This Langnau bakery is more than 125 years old and a favorite of Andie's for its thick gingerbread piped with designs, tuiles that range from sweet to savory such as rosemary and cheese, and meringues. Although their retail storefront closed earlier this year, this local landmark is still in use as a commercial bakery, and their products can be found in Globus department stores throughout Switzerland, as well as ordered online at *tuiles-baeckerei.ch*.

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Sweet + Swiss
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Signature Swiss Breads

HEDDI NIEUWSMA SHARES WHAT MAKES SWISS HOLIDAY BREADS—STEEPED IN TRADITION—SO UNIQUE

RECIPE DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD STYLING BY HEDDI NIEUWSMA

Heddi Nieuwsma's passion for learning about Swiss food and culture led her to start her blog, *Cuisine Helvetica*, when she moved to the French-speaking city of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, with her family more than a decade ago. Heddi was immediately struck by the number of bakeries she could walk to in her neighborhood and the variety of breads she saw there. Fun fact: Switzerland has more than 200 varieties of bread, many of which are very regional.

During the holidays, Swiss breads from around the country are similar in that they're made from an enriched dough and often contain dried fruit. You'll also find regional gingerbreads such as *biber* (gingerbread filled with almond paste), *Luzerner Lebkuchen* (gingerbread made with a pear syrup), and *biscômes* (firm rectangular spice breads) in French-speaking Switzerland. On St. Nicholas Day (December 6), *Grittibänzen*, which are little bread men, are baked. Heddi says the loose translation for *Grittibänz* means "old frail man walking with his legs spread apart." In French-speaking Switzerland, they're called *bonshommes en pâte*.

Another centuries-old tradition in Switzerland is the use of communal ovens. According to Heddi, people would originally bring their bread dough to these wood-fired ovens to bake since they couldn't do so at home. While things have certainly changed in that realm, communal ovens still exist in many cantons (or states) . . . and that's a tradition we can get behind. Those who bake together stay together.

ROSINENKRANZ

Makes 1 loaf

A round loaf found in central Switzerland during the holiday season, the Rosinenkranz *contains dried currants. Heddi does not add any sugar to the dough, instead relying on the dried fruit to provide the sweetness. Use kitchen shears to cut the special design into the surface of the dough before it bakes.*

1 cup plus 3 tablespoons (285 grams) lukewarm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 115°F/43°C)
1⅛ teaspoons (3.5 grams) active dry yeast
2 large eggs (100 grams), room temperature and divided
3½ to 4 cups (445 to 508 grams) bread flour, plus more for dusting
3½ tablespoons (49 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
⅔ cup (85 grams) dried currants

1. In a small bowl, stir together lukewarm milk and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In another small bowl, lightly whisk 1 egg (50 grams).
3. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, place 3½ cups (444 grams) flour, butter, and salt. Add yeast mixture and whisked egg. Beat at low speed until combined, 1 to 2 minutes.
4. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium-low speed until dough is smooth and elastic, about 6 minutes; add up to remaining ½ cup (63 grams) flour, 1 tablespoon (8 grams) at a time, if needed. Add currants; beat until evenly distributed, about 2 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a ball.
5. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 2 hours.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
7. Gently punch down dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a circle. Using your hands, make a hole in center of dough, and carefully form dough into a large doughnut shape 9 to 10 inches in diameter. Carefully transfer dough to prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, about 30 minutes.
8. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
9. In another small bowl, whisk remaining 1 egg (50 grams); brush onto dough. Using a small paring knife, score top of dough around surface of loaf. Using kitchen shears, make small zigzag cuts into circle scored into dough.
10. Bake until golden brown, 18 to 25 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

DREIKÖNIGSKUCHEN

Makes 1 yeasted cake

This brioche-style Dreikönigskuchen (Three Kings Cake) is made for January 6 in Switzerland for Three Kings' Day (also known as Epiphany). Be careful when you take a bite of this bread! One of the small buns contains a whole almond, or you can use a decorative feve instead. Whoever finds it becomes king or queen for the day. Heddi's version contains chunks of chocolate, which bakers sometimes use instead of raisins. As recommended by her youngest son, she also adds candied ginger to the dough, but it's not a traditional ingredient.

Dough:

1⅓ cups (320 grams) lukewarm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)
1 tablespoon (9 grams) active dry yeast
2¾ cups bread flour (349 grams)
1¼ cups (150 grams) spelt flour
2 tablespoons (24 grams) granulated sugar
1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
1 large egg white (30 grams), room temperature
1 (3.5-ounce) bar (100 grams) dark chocolate, chopped
⅓ to ½ cup (40 to 65 grams) candied ginger, finely chopped
All-purpose or bread flour, for dusting
1 whole almond or feve

Topping:

1 large egg yolk (19 grams), room temperature and beaten
1 teaspoon (5 grams) whole milk, room temperature
Swedish pearl sugar, for sprinkling
Sliced almonds, for sprinkling

1. For dough: In a small bowl, whisk together lukewarm milk and yeast. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat bread flour, spelt flour, granulated sugar, and salt at low speed until well combined, about 1 minute. Add yeast mixture, butter, and egg white, and beat until dough is well combined, 1 to 2 minutes.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium speed until dough is smooth and elastic, about 8 minutes. Add chocolate and ginger; beat until well combined, about 2 minutes.
4. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose or bread flour, and turn out dough; shape dough into a ball.
5. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 2 hours.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
7. Lightly dust work surface with all-purpose or bread flour. Turn out dough onto prepared surface, and shape about one-fourth of dough (about 266 grams) into a large round; place it on center of prepared pan. Divide remaining dough into 8 portions (about 99 grams each), and shape each into a ball. Poke whole almond into center of 1 small dough ball. Place dough balls, evenly spaced, in a circle around large portion of dough on pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, about 30 minutes.
8. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
9. For topping: In another small bowl, whisk together egg yolk and milk; brush on top and sides of dough. Sprinkle with pearl sugar and sliced almonds.
10. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 190°F (88°C), 25 to 35 minutes. Let cool completely on pan on a wire rack. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

HEFEGUGELHOPF

Makes 1 (10-cup) yeasted cake

Hefegugelhopf is essentially the yeasted European version of the American Bundt cake. This recipe requires the dough to rise twice, first in a bowl and then in the fluted pan. Heddi makes it with cranberries, but you can use raisins instead. Originally from Minnesota, Heddi has always had a particular fondness for these cakes because Nordic Ware, the company behind Bundt pans, is based there.

Sponge:

- 1 cup (125 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 cup (240 grams) lukewarm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 110°F/43°C)
- 5 teaspoons (15 grams) active dry yeast
- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar

Dough:

- 3 cups (375 grams) all-purpose flour
- ⅔ cup (150 grams) unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup (50 grams) granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs (100 grams), lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) rum
- 2 teaspoons (2 grams) lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt
- ¾ cup (96 grams) dried cranberries
- ⅓ cup (50 grams) finely chopped candied orange peel

Whole almonds
Confectioners' sugar, for dusting

1. For sponge: In the bowl of a stand mixer, place flour; make a well in center.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together lukewarm milk and yeast. Let stand until foamy, 5 to 10 minutes. Whisk in granulated sugar until combined. Add yeast mixture to well in flour; stir just until a thick paste forms. (It's OK if not all the flour is mixed in.) Cover and let stand until mixture is foamy, 20 to 30 minutes.
3. For dough: Add flour, butter, granulated sugar, eggs, rum, lemon zest, and salt to sponge in bowl of stand mixer. Using the paddle attachment, beat at medium-low speed until dough is smooth and begins to pull away from sides of bowl, about 10 minutes. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 2 hours.
4. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Add cranberries and orange peel to dough, and beat at medium-low speed until evenly distributed, 2 to 5 minutes.
5. Spray a 10-cup kugelhopf pan or Bundt pan with baking spray with flour. Arrange almonds in a ring in bottom of pan. Transfer dough to prepared pan, gently pressing dough so almonds adhere. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, about 1 hour.
6. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
7. Bake until golden brown and an instant-read thermometer inserted near center registers 190°F (88°C), 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert cake onto a wire rack, and let cool completely. Dust with confectioners' sugar before serving. Store in airtight container for up to 3 days.

GRITTIBÄNZ

Makes 4 bread people

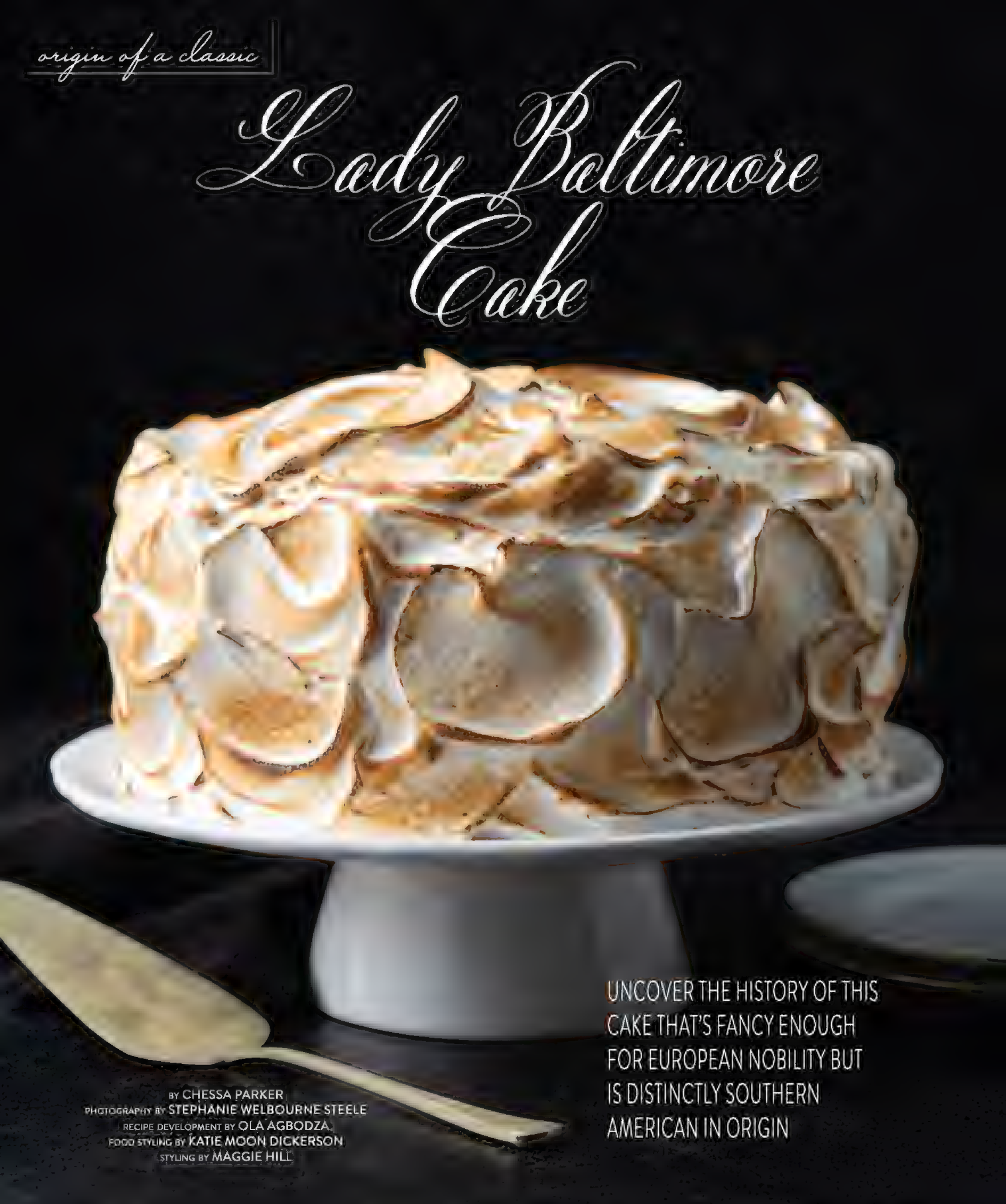
Grittibänzen are little bread people made at Christmastime in Switzerland, and particularly for St. Nicholas Day on December 6. Very loosely translated, "Grittibänz" means something like "old frail man walking with his legs spread apart." You could imagine them as the bready version of a gingerbread man. They make for a great holiday baking project for kids (and adults, too!).

1⅓ cups (320 grams) lukewarm whole milk (105°F/41°C to 115°F/43°C)
2¼ teaspoons (7 grams) active dry yeast
4 cups (508 grams) bread flour
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, cubed and softened
2 teaspoons (6 grams) kosher salt
2 tablespoons (42 grams) honey
1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste or (4 grams) vanilla extract
1 large egg (50 grams), lightly beaten
Pumpkin seeds
Pistachio or almonds
Raisins or dried cranberries
Swedish pearl sugar, for sprinkling

1. In a small bowl, whisk together lukewarm milk and yeast. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes.
2. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat flour, butter, and salt at low speed until combined, 1 to 2 minutes. Add yeast mixture, honey, and vanilla, and beat until combined.
3. Switch to the dough hook attachment. Beat at medium speed until dough is smooth and elastic, about 10 minutes. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and shape into a ball.
4. Spray a large bowl with cooking spray. Place dough in bowl, turning to grease top. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until doubled in size, 1 to 2 hours.
5. Line 1 large or 2 small baking sheets with parchment paper.
6. Punch down dough. Turn out dough onto a lightly floured surface, and divide into 4 portions (about 231 grams each). Shape each portion into a person as desired. Place on prepared pan. Cover and let rise in a warm, draft-free place (75°F/24°C) until puffed, about 30 minutes.
7. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
8. Brush egg onto dough. Press seeds, nuts, and dried fruits into dough as desired to decorate. Sprinkle with pearl sugar.
9. Bake until golden brown, 12 to 20 minutes. Let cool on pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack. Store in an airtight containerfor up to 3 days.

origin of a classic

Lady Baltimore Cake



UNCOVER THE HISTORY OF THIS CAKE THAT'S FANCY ENOUGH FOR EUROPEAN NOBILITY BUT IS DISTINCTLY SOUTHERN AMERICAN IN ORIGIN

BY CHESSA PARKER
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHANIE WELBOURNE STEELE
RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON
STYLING BY MAGGIE HILL

Images of extravagant celebrations may dance in your mind—and across your tongue—when hearing the name and having a bite of this classic Southern dessert. With a name like Lady Baltimore cake, a title once found in British nobility, one might imagine regality in each bite, as the flavors induce an idea of how a Lady Baltimore would have appeared: a woman of high society from a sumptuous time, befitting of a cake of such grandeur.

Alas, the only real Lady Baltimore was Joan Calvert, born in London, England, in 1588, the second wife to the first Lord Baltimore. Since the woman herself never visited the New World, we can say she was likely not the inspiration for the original recipe. However, the use of noble-adjacent names fo sweets was a bit of a trend from the 18th to the 20th centuries, and queen cakes, which long predate the Lady Baltimore cake, are the perfect example. Tiny, sweet desserts served to show extravagance, queen cakes are believed to have been named after Queen Mary II of England, Scotland, and Ireland, who reigned from 1689 until her death in 1694.

There are many stories that tell the origins of the Lady Baltimore cake, but most seem to point to a novel titled *Lady Baltimore*, published in 1905, by author Owen Wister, who was born in Pennsylvania in 1860. If you assume the setting of the novel is Baltimore, Maryland, the cake's name has deceived you once again. *Lady Baltimore* is set in Kings Port, a fictional town emulating Charleston, South Carolina, during the turn of the 20th century. So, if the cake isn't named after a real person or a real place, why is the novel titled *Lady Baltimore*?

Wister did not create the Lady Baltimore cake out of thin air but rather from experience. A frequent visitor to The Women's Exchange Tea Room in Charleston, South Carolina, Wister would have first come across the dessert thanks to Alicia Rhett Mayberry, a woman of note within the community and a baker at the tearoom. Alicia is often credited for the cake, but a deeper dive into the history reveals the woefully underdiscussed names of Florence and Nina Ottolengui. The sisters were longtime managers of the tearoom and were likely the true creators of the Lady Baltimore cake.

In Wister's novel, a groom is doubting whether he wants to follow through with marrying his current love interest. While debating his predicament, the groom orders the Lady Baltimore cake at a local bakery, where he meets his true love, Eliza, who takes his order. During the scene, Wister takes a moment to elaborate on just how special the Lady Baltimore cake is by having the groom gush about the cake:

"I should like a slice, if you please, of Lady Baltimore," I said with extreme formality. I returned to the table and she brought me the cake, and I had my first felicitous meeting with Lady Baltimore. Oh, my goodness! Did you ever taste it? It's all soft, and it's in layers, and it has nuts—but I can't write any more about it; my mouth waters too much. Delighted surprise caused me once more to speak aloud, and with my mouth full, "But, dear me, this is delicious!"

While the novel received mixed reviews, this paragraph alone led to the mass takeover of the Lady Baltimore cake, with newspapers and journals across the country featuring varying recipes. The first recipe to appear in a newspaper was in 1906 in the *Daily Gazette and Bulletin* of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. In its simplest form, Lady Baltimore cake is a layered white cake with white frosting and a fruit and nut filling. When looking at Lady Baltimore cakes that are common today, the majority are rooted in a recipe by Blanche Rhett, a relative of Alicia Rhett Mayberry, in her cookbook *Two Hundred Years of Charleston Cooking*. Her take on the classic includes a cake made with only egg whites and a filling consisting of dried figs, raisins, toasted walnuts, and sherry.

Modern recipes frequently call for a thin syrup made of sugar, water, and extracts that gets brushed on the white cake layers as they cool. The syrup allows the layers to maintain their tender, moist crumb while absorbing the delicious, sweet flavors. The frosting, based on a classic seven-minute frosting and an Italian meringue, is made by pouring a boiled sugar syrup into beaten egg whites. The frosting stiffens as it cools and is used to decorate the outside of the cake, as well as stirred into the filling ingredients. Additionally, recipes often include sherry-soaked chopped raisins and nuts, giving the cake an extra pop of flavor and the perfect crunch. Fruit, nuts, or flaked coconut often garnish the top for a final accent to the stunning layers.

There are many variations and substitutions that can be found for this beautiful cake. Some recipes call for different fruits in the filling, like apricots or cherries, while others call for different nuts, like pecans or almonds. Some bakers choose to make their cakes nonalcoholic, while others choose to make their cakes stronger or with different alcohols, such as bourbon. The original recipe calls for a mixture of dried fruit, nuts, alcohol, and spices for the filling, yet since the fruits weren't specified, it goes without saying that bakers can mix and match whatever suits their taste, kitchen, and budget.

At its heart, the Lady Baltimore cake allows bakers and tasters to feel nobility-adjacent for a few delicious bites, savoring the splendor of an eternally cherished cake. While the moments enjoying this regal dessert may be ephemeral, the Lady Baltimore cake lives on through each variation made. Enjoy our cranberry-filled version for a cake as delectable as it is enduring.

THE OTHER BALTIMORE

Both Lady and Lord Baltimore cakes are popular, but what's the difference between them? Lord Baltimore cake uses egg yolks in the batter, and the fruit and nut filling is kept separate from the meringue frosting between the layers of the cake. Find our Lord Baltimore Cake recipe at *bakefromscratch.com*.

LADY BALTIMORE CAKE

Makes 1 (8-inch) cake

Our awe-inspiring Lady Baltimore Cake recipe shows why this dessert has been passed down for more than 100 years. Ruby-red cranberries mix with earthy pecans and bold sherry for a filling as delicious as the soft white cake layers and the meringue that decorates the outside.

5 large eggs (250 grams)
⅔ cup (133 grams) granulated sugar
¾ cup (94 grams) cake flour
¼ cup (32 grams) cornstarch
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
¼ cup (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted
1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract
⅔ cup (85 grams) dried cranberries, finely chopped
½ cup (120 grams) sherry or brandy
½ cup (83 grams) chopped dried Mission figs
⅓ cup (43 grams) golden raisins, finely chopped
¾ cup (85 grams) toasted pecans*, finely chopped
Vanilla Italian Meringue (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line bottom of 2 (8-inch) round cake pans with parchment paper; spray paper with cooking spray.
2. In the heatproof bowl of a stand mixer, whisk together eggs and sugar. Place bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Cook, whisking occasionally, until an instant-read thermometer registers 110°F (43°C).
3. Carefully return bowl to stand mixer. Using the whisk attachment, beat at high speed until mixture has tripled in volume, is thick, and falls back on itself in ribbons when whisk is lifted from bowl, 4 to 5 minutes.
4. In a small bowl, sift together flour, cornstarch, and salt. Gently fold flour mixture into egg mixture just until combined.
5. Transfer 1 cup (75 grams) batter to another small bowl; whisk in melted butter and vanilla until combined. Fold butter mixture into remaining batter just until combined. Divide batter between prepared pans (about 3⅓ cups or 275 grams each).
6. Bake until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean,

15 to 20 minutes. Let cool completely in pans on wire racks.

7. Carefully run a small paring knife or offset spatula around edges of cooled cake layers to loosen from pans. Carefully remove from pans, and gently remove parchment. Trim top of cake layers, if desired. Wrap layers individually in plastic wrap, and freeze for 1 hour.

8. In a small saucepan, bring cranberries, sherry or brandy, figs, and raisins to a boil over medium-high; reduce heat, and simmer, stirring occasionally, until almost all liquid has evaporated. Let cool completely. Stir in pecans.

9. In a medium bowl, stir together cooled fruit mixture and 1½ cups (75 grams) Vanilla Italian Meringue. Place 1 cake layer on a cake stand. Spread fruit mixture onto cake layer. Top with remaining cake layer. Spread remaining meringue on top and sides of cake. Using a handheld kitchen torch, carefully brown meringue as desired. Serve immediately. Refrigerate in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

**We used Schermer Pecans.*

Vanilla Italian Meringue

Makes 10 cups

- **6 large egg whites (180 grams), room temperature**
- **¾ teaspoon cream of tartar**
- **½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt**
- **1½ cups (300 grams) granulated sugar**
- **½ cup (120 grams) water**
- **1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste**

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, beat egg whites, cream of tartar, and salt at medium speed until foamy and tripled in volume, about 2 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, in a small saucepan, bring sugar and ½ cup (120 grams) water to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring just until sugar dissolves. Cook, without stirring, until an instant-read thermometer registers 240°F (116°C).

3. With mixer on medium-high speed, carefully pour hot sugar syrup into egg white mixture in a slow, steady stream. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until mixture is thick, fluffy, and glossy, 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in vanilla bean paste. Use immediately.

small batch

THESE SNOWY-WHITE CUPCAKES ARE AN ELEGANTLY EASY HOLIDAY TREAT

SWEET SIMPLICITY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER / RECIPE DEVELOPMENT BY OLA AGBODZA
FOOD STYLING BY AARON CONRAD / STYLING BY MARY BETH JONES

VANILLA CUPCAKES WITH VANILLA BUTTERCREAM

Makes 6 cupcakes

Speckled with vanilla bean seeds throughout the batter and frosting, these richly fragrant cupcakes are soft and tender, with just the right amount of sweet.

½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
¾ cup (150 grams) granulated sugar
1 large egg (50 grams), room temperature
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons (141 grams) cake flour
¾ teaspoon (3.75 grams) baking powder
½ teaspoon (1.5 grams) kosher salt
⅓ cup (80 grams) whole buttermilk, room temperature
2 teaspoons (12 grams) vanilla bean paste
Vanilla Buttercream (recipe follows)
Garnish: sparkling sugar

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line 6 alternating cups of a 12-cup muffin pan with paper or foil liners.
2. In the work bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter and granulated sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy, 3 to 4 minutes, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add egg, and beat until combined.
3. In a small bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt. With mixer on low speed, gradually add flour mixture to butter mixture alternately with buttermilk, beginning and ending with flour mixture, beating just until combined after each addition, stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Beat in vanilla bean paste until combined. Divide batter among prepared muffin cups (about 3 heaping tablespoons or 80 grams each). Fill empty muffin cups halfway full with water.
4. Bake until tops are golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove from pan, and let cool completely on a wire rack.
5. Spread Vanilla Buttercream onto cooled cupcakes as desired. Garnish with sparkling sugar, if desired. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Vanilla Buttercream

Makes 1¼ cups

½ cup (113 grams) unsalted butter, softened
2 cups (240 grams) confectioners' sugar
⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
1 tablespoon (15 grams) whole buttermilk
1 teaspoon (6 grams) vanilla bean paste

1. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, beat butter at medium speed until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. With mixer on low speed, gradually add confectioners' sugar and salt, beating until smooth and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Add buttermilk and vanilla bean paste, beating until smooth and stopping to scrape sides of bowl. Increase mixer speed to high, and beat until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Use immediately.

HOLIDAY BAKES IN A FLASH

JESSIE SHEEHAN TRANSFORMS TWO FAVORITE SEASONAL TREATS INTO SUPER-SPEEDY VERSIONS OF THEIR ORIGINALS WITHOUT COMPROMISING ON FLAVOR

BY JESSIE SHEEHAN

One-Bowl Pecan Pie Bars with Brown Sugar Crust
page 111

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KYLE CARPENTER
FOOD STYLING BY KATIE MOON DICKERSON / STYLING BY MAGGIE HILL

Cranberry-Orange
Cream Scones
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ONE-BOWL PECAN PIE BARS WITH BROWN SUGAR CRUST

Makes 24 bars

A pecan pie in bar form is my idea of a very good time. Assembled and baked in about a quarter of the time it would take you to make an actual pecan pie but equally as delicious—gooey, nutty, and sweet, with a crispy bottom crust—these still manage to be just as good (OK, better??) than their pie brethren. And they're perfect served with whipped cream or ice cream for the holidays or eaten by hand on a random Tuesday while standing over the kitchen sink (if you know, you know).

Crust:

- **2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour**
- **¾ cup (165 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **¾ cup (170 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **1 teaspoon (4 grams) vanilla extract**

Filling:

- **¾ cup (165 grams) firmly packed light brown sugar**
- **4 tablespoons (57 grams) unsalted butter, melted**
- **1 cup (336 grams) light corn syrup**
- **4 large eggs (200 grams)**
- **1½ teaspoons (6 grams) vanilla extract**
- **1 teaspoon (3 grams) kosher salt**
- **2 cups (192 grams) pecans, coarsely chopped**

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C). Line a 13x9-inch baking pan with foil, letting excess extend over sides of pan. Lightly spray foil with cooking spray.
2. For crust: In a large bowl, whisk together flour, brown sugar, and salt. Add melted butter and vanilla; stir with a fork until well combined and mixture holds together when squeezed. Press dough into bottom of prepared pan.
3. Bake until golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Leave oven on.
4. For filling: In same large bowl, whisk together brown sugar and melted butter until well combined. Whisk in corn syrup, eggs, vanilla, and salt until well combined. Fold in pecans. Spread filling onto prepared crust.
5. Bake until top is set, edges are browned, and an instant-read thermometer inserted in center registers 200°F (93°C), about 25 minutes. Let cool completely in pan on a wire rack. Cover and refrigerate until firm, at least 4 hours, or up to overnight.
6. Using excess foil as handles, remove from pan, and cut into bars. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days.

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CRANBERRY-ORANGE CREAM SCONES

Makes 8 scones

Cream scones are truly the most tender and magical of easy breakfast treats. The cream takes the place of butter in a cream scone—hence the name—and thus, assembling consists of nothing more than whisking dry ingredients, pouring in the wet ingredients, and folding them all together. Done and done. Here, I rub some orange zest into the sugar and fold in a handful of cranberries for a holiday scone like no other. An egg wash helps with browning, a sprinkle of turbinado sugar provides crunch and sparkle, and an orange glaze boosts the flavor. Holiday breakfasts don't get much better than this.

- ½ cup (100 grams) granulated sugar
- 3 tablespoons (18 grams) orange zest (about 3 medium oranges), divided
- 2 cups (250 grams) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon (15 grams) baking powder
- 1⅛ teaspoons (3 grams) kosher salt, divided
- 1 cup (240 grams) heavy whipping cream
- 1 tablespoon (13 grams) vanilla extract
- 1 cup (96 grams) fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 large egg (50 grams)
- Turbinado sugar, for sprinkling
- 1 cup (120 grams) confectioners' sugar
- 1 to 2 tablespoons (15 to 30 grams) fresh orange juice

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In a large bowl, rub together granulated sugar and 2 tablespoons (12 grams) orange zest with your fingers; whisk in flour, baking powder, and 1 teaspoon (3 grams) salt.
3. In a liquid-measuring cup, combine cream and vanilla; add to flour mixture. Add cranberries, and fold until a shaggy dough forms.
4. Turn out dough onto a heavily floured surface; knead dough just until it comes together, 1 or 2 times. Shape dough into a 7-inch circle; cut into 8 wedges. Place 2 inches apart on prepared pan.
5. In a small bowl, whisk together egg and remaining ⅛ teaspoon salt; brush onto scones, and sprinkle with turbinado sugar.
6. Bake until golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Let cool on pan for 15 to 20 minutes.
7. In another small bowl, whisk together confectioners' sugar, 1 tablespoon (15 grams) orange juice, and remaining 1 tablespoon (6 grams) orange zest until thick and smooth; whisk in up to remaining 1 tablespoon (15 grams) orange juice, 1 teaspoon (5 grams) at a time, if a thinner glaze is desired. Drizzle glaze onto warm scones; serve immediately.

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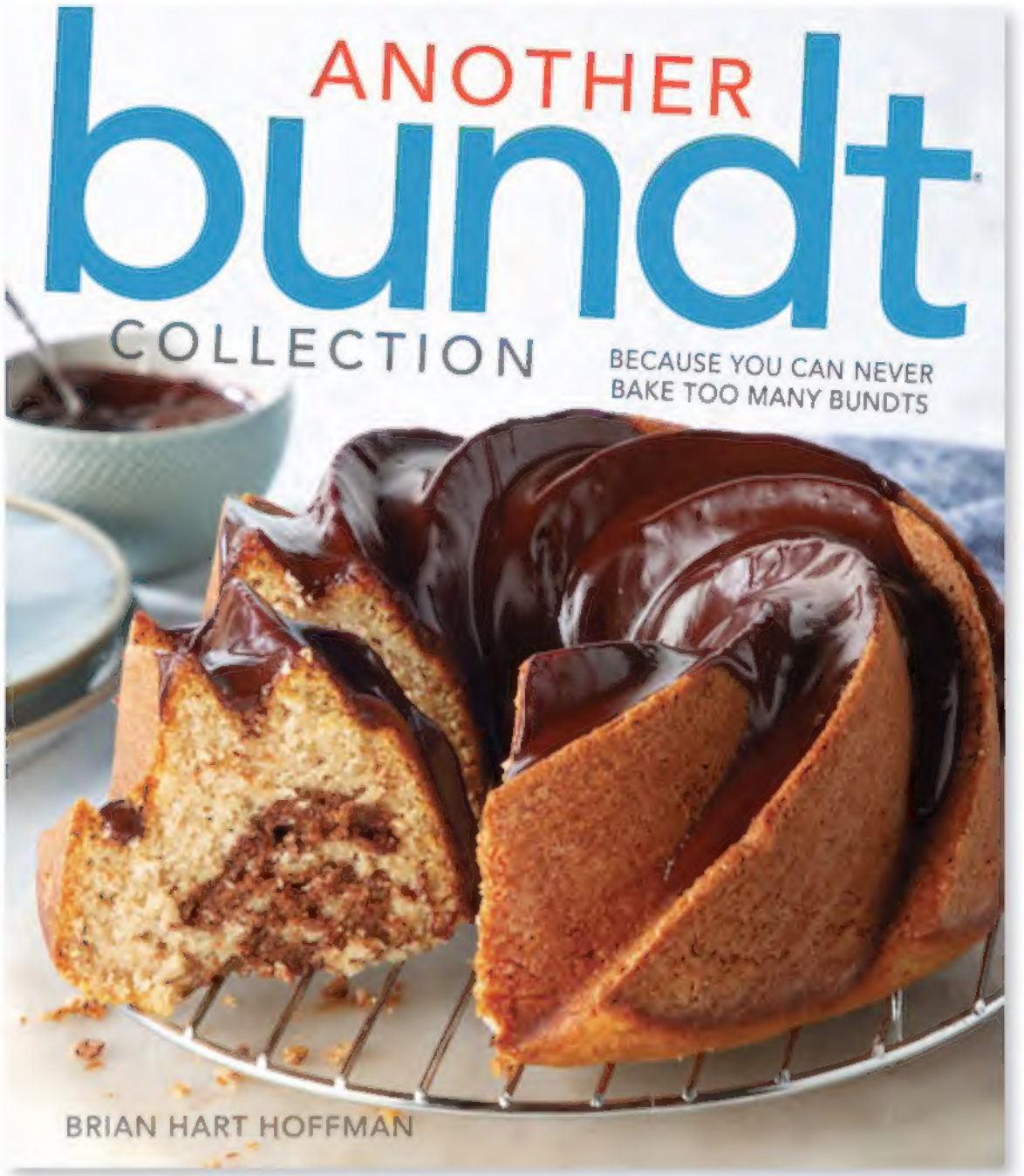

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